

Elementary English

A Magazine of the Language Arts

READING
•
WRITING
•
SPEAKING
•
LISTENING
•
SPELLING
•
ENGLISH USAGE
•
CHILDREN'S BOOKS
•
RADIO AND
TELEVISION
•
AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS
•
POETRY
•
CREATIVE
WRITING

TALL TALES OF WILLIAM O. STEELE
LEWIS CARROLL SHELF AWARDS
HANDWRITING SPEEDS
SOCIAL INFLUENCES ON LANGUAGE
SEVENTEEN QUALITIES OF WRITING
LANGUAGE ARTS TODAY



G. Robert Carlsen, President
THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

*Organ of the National Council
of Teachers of English*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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- | | |
|-----|---|
| 545 | Tennessee's Teller of Tall Tales—William O. Steele
PAUL C. BURNS AND RUTH HINES |
| 549 | A Tool for the Selection of Children's Books: The Lewis
Carroll Shelf Awards
DAVID C. DAVIS |
| 553 | Social-Class Influences upon Learning: Linguistic Im-
plications
CARL A. LEFEVRE |
| 556 | The Language Arts in Today's World
STANLEY S. STAHL, JR. |
| 561 | The More We Get Together
LUCILLE INGALLS AND FRANCES ISSOTT |
| 564 | New Speeds of Handwriting
PATRICK J. GROFF |
| 566 | Individualized Reading vs. Group Reading I
E. W. DOLCH |
| 576 | Seventeen Qualities of Original Writing
RUTH KEARNEY CARLSON |
| 580 | Should We Teach the Short Story?
SISTER MARY PATRICK, S.C. S.C. |
| 581 | Aliveness—Then Retention
ADA ANTHIS PRITCHETT |
| 584 | Councilletter
MURIEL CROSBY |
| 586 | Idea Inventory
Edited by LOUISE HOVDE MORTENSEN |
| 589 | The Educational Scene
Edited by BERNICE J. WOLFSON |
| 593 | Books for Children
Edited by MABEL F. ALTSTETTER |

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PAUL C. BURNS AND RUTH HINES

Tennessee's Teller of Tall Tales-- William O. Steele



Photo by J. B. Collins,
Chattanooga News-Free Press

William O. Steele

"It seems that stories are getting about that I'd rather climb a tree and tell a lie than stand on the ground and tell the truth, that I'd rather lie on credit than tell the truth for cash . . . it is hard for somebody like me to distinguish between a lie and the truth, between fact and fiction. A tall tale is the slipperiest thing on earth to lay a finger on," William O. Steele says in writing about the long hunter and the tall tale (*The Horn Book*

Magazine, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1 (February, 1958) pp. 54-62). Mr. Steele is an authority on both the long hunter and the tall tale and uses this knowledge to advantage in writing exciting stories of frontier life in the old Southwest for young people.

Mr. Steele, who now lives at Signal Mountain, Tennessee, is a native Tennessean. He was born in Franklin in 1917. He received his undergraduate degree from Cumberland University where he worked on the college paper. He also wrote for a weekly newspaper in Franklin. However, his writing career did not begin in earnest until after he had completed five years of service in the Army and the Air Force during World War II.

In 1945, Donald Davidson's book, *The Tennessee*, Volume 1 in the *Rivers of America* Series, sparked Mr. Steele's interest in Tennessee folklore and early history. After doing graduate work at the University of Chattanooga, he wrote an adult history of the area. Then he turned to writing for children, a field in which he has been very successful. Mr. Steele's answer to an inquiry frequently made of authors is, "Success in writing actually amounts to the interest an author has in his subject. And of course, a good deal of hard work." There is ample evidence of the fact that a great deal of interest and hard work go into the books written in the Steele home where his four aides

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and critics are always on tap: Mrs. Steele, the former Mary Quintard Govan, also a writer, and the three children, Mary Quintard, Jenifer Susan, and Allerton William.

The list of Mr. Steele's books is steadily increasing and now includes the following:

- Golden Root*, 1951
Buffalo Knife, 1952
Over Mountain Boy, 1952
Wilderness Journey, 1953
 (selected by
 Parent's Magazine Book Club for 1955)
Story of Daniel Boone, 1953
John Sevier, 1953
Winter Danger, 1954 (New York Herald Tribune Spring Book Festival Award)
Francis Marion, 1954
Story of Leif Ericson, 1954
Tomahawks and Trouble, 1955
Davy Crockett's Earthquake, 1956 (New York Spring Festival Honor Book)
We Were There on the Oregon Trail, 1956
We Were There on the Pony Express, 1956
DeSoto, Child of the Sun, 1956
The Lone Hunt, 1956 (Special citation from Child Study Association)
Flaming Arrow, 1956 (New York Spring Festival Honor Book; William Allen White Award Winner, 1960)
Daniel Boone's Echo, 1957
Perilous Road, 1958 (Jane Addams Children's Book Award and runner-up for 1959 Newbery Medal)
Andy Jackson's Water Well, 1959
The Far Frontier, 1959
The Spooky Thing, 1960

Mr. Steele's stories of frontier life have received wide acclaim, but equally delightful, though probably less well known, are his tall tales *Davy Crockett's Earthquake*, *Daniel Boone's Echo*, *Andy Jackson's Water Well*, and *The Spooky Thing*.

The tall tale has a long and interesting history. Though not native to America, it was affectionately adopted and used most effectively by the hardy frontiersmen of young America. The wild new country just being settled was indeed marvelous—so marvelous that the ordinary descriptive terms were inadequate in painting a

The SPOOKY THING

William O. Steele

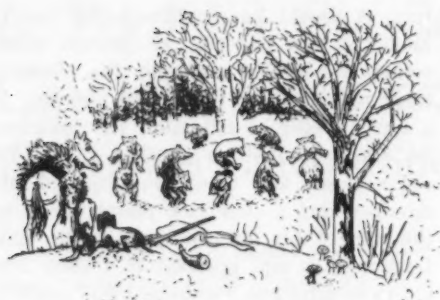


Illustrated by Paul Coker

HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY, NEW YORK

true picture. So the hunters and scouts who went out to explore reported what they found in absurdly exaggerated and picturesque language. The heroes of those days in time became legendary figures whose feats of strength and bravery were unsurpassed. There were many of these in the old Southwest which is the locale of many of Mr. Steele's stories and so he finds abundant material with which to work.

Davy Crockett, Tennessee's "Coonskin Congressman" and one of the heroes of the Alamo, is the subject of the first of Mr. Steele's tall tales, *Davy Crockett's Earthquake*. Davy went into West Tennessee on a hunting trip in the year 1811. He hoped to find a few bears on this trip and he was successful. But there came an earthquake which changed the course of the Mississippi River and then the great comet came "swinging down low in the



DAVY CROCKETT'S EARTHQUAKE

by William O. Steele

illustrated by Nicolas Mordvinoff. Published by
Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.

treetops, shaking its long fiery tail," adding to Davy's troubles. His adventures make a story full of fun and excitement.

Daniel Boone's Echo tells the story of Daniel's going into Kentucky to live for a year to prove that the country was a safe place for settlers. He took with him a boy named Aaron Adamsdale, a timid young lad who was frightened by the tales he had heard of the Sling-Tailed Galootis, the One-Horned Sumpple, and other monsters that lived in Kentucky. Aaron was so scared he shook until Daniel was afraid he would shake his ears right off his head. Daniel kept reminding Aaron, "A body can't be scared of something till he knows what it is." After many narrow escapes the two reached Kentucky and settled in a valley so wide that when Daniel called out at bedtime, "Wake up, boys, its getting-up time," the echo came back to wake them at sunrise the next morning. One morning the echo didn't come back. It was lost and it took them several days to locate it. By the time the year was up Aaron had learned "that a body must first go and see what a thing is before he gets scared of it, else it's a great waste of time and trouble, shivering over what isn't there at all."

Historians have told us that young Andy

Jackson set up an office to practice law in Nashville, but it was left to Mr. Steele to tell the story of *Andy Jackson's Water Well*. Soon after Andy arrived in Nashville, a terrible drought struck the area. "Wells dried up and springs went plumb dry. . . . Little baby turtles swam in dusty puddles. . . . Folks took to squeezing their springs to get the last drop of water for their young 'uns." Andy and his friend Chief Eight Shillings Six Pence Tickle-pitcher were selected to go to East Tennessee to bring back water for the people of Nashville. Thirst and an encounter with a hoopsnake complicated the task, but they found a fine well, pulled it up, and brought it back to Nashville in spite of the efforts of the Terrible Land Pirates to stop them. The people were very grateful to Andy, "And they do say that Andy Jackson helped out the folks every way he knew after that. They say he even got to be president of the United States, but I don't know. It may be just a tall tale."



ANDY JACKSON'S WATER WELL

by William O. Steele

illustrated by Michael Ramus. Published by
Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.

The latest of Mr. Steele's tales is *The Spooky Thing*. This "Thing" had sharp teeth and a body full of thorny bristles and it spoke in a hollow voice. When Gist and Meriwether, who were "onery

and mean as a bushel of rattlesnakes," came face to face with the "Thing," a lively chase began.

As one reads these stories it is easy to imagine an old storyteller whittling as he tells a tale to his neighbors gathered at the country store, using deadpan expression and matter-of-fact drawl to emphasize the delightful absurdities of the story. Mr. Steele writes in a similar vein—he doesn't depend upon mere exaggeration for his humor. He keeps the tall tales realistic and close to the truth. He manages to choose picturesque words and makes his descriptions vivid—his stories are excellent for reading aloud. Children are fascinated by the sound of such words and phrases as "discombobulated," "bodacious," "confabulated together," or "pondered prodigiously." Telling tall tales is a real art with Steele and through them he expresses his exuberance for life, his youthful optimism.

Mr. Steele, in a recent letter to the writers of this article, said: "I take my tall tales wherever I can find them: in old journals or reminiscences, Crockett Almanacs, or the literary group called the Old Southwest Humorists, which culminated in Mark Twain. The tall tale has always been told for pleasure, for guffawing, for entertainment pure and simple. I try to follow in that tradition, shaping the material to my own use, making it up often." Many bits of folklore are woven together into a smooth, continuous narrative in his stories. There is plenty of action, excitement, and good fun to appeal to any youngster. It is not surprising that many young library patrons greet the librarian with requests for "another Steele book."

While *Davy Crockett's Earthquake*, *Daniel Boone's Echo*, *Andy Jackson's Water Well*, and *The Spooky Thing* are his major contributions to tall tale litera-

ture, it should be mentioned that use is made of the tall tale in Steele's more serious works. For example, Mr. Greene, the long hunter in *Wilderness Journey*, is a typical teller of tall tales. He describes his encounter with a panther, "Well, he come closer and closer and opened his mouth wider. I could see plumb down to the root of his tail. So quick as a wink I reached in and grabbed it. I gave one most powerful jerk and turned that panther inside out." The boy Flan, who learned much on the journey with the long hunter, proves an apt pupil when he explains a stalactite to his older brothers, "It's the tail of a cave rat . . . The varmints wait till you're sleeping in a cave and then they stab you with their tails."

The publishers of Steele's tall tales have been wise in their selection of illustrators. Black and white sketches by Nicolas, the well-known Caldecott Award winner, contribute to the fun of *Davy Crockett's Earthquake* and *Daniel Boone's Echo*. Michael Ramus' drawings reflect the mood of *Andy Jackson's Water Well*. *The Spooky Thing* is appropriately illustrated by Paul Coker.

Mr. Steele has brought many talents to the tall tale literature for young children: spellbinding story telling; delightful dialogue; and a gratifying respect for children's sense of humor (often underrated by writers for children).

At the time of this writing, Mr. Steele is preparing a nonfiction book about Adair, Wiggan, and some of the other men who pushed inland in the eighteenth century and their reasons for doing so. When this is completed, he hopes to do another tall tale.

To Mr. William O. Steele, Tennessee's teller of tall tales, the children of all fifty states send three "whoops and a holler" for the best "crackerjack yarns" told in a "coon's age."

A Tool for the Selection of Children's Books: The Lewis Carroll Shelf Awards

Neither children nor adults read a great many recreational books in a lifetime. This is an observable fact. Excluding required textbooks and assigned reading in school it may be safely said that children between the years of seven and fourteen read less than five hundred books. Outside the reading necessary for occupational proficiency, the number of books read by the average adult may be estimated at no more than seven hundred!

Adults who are avid readers feel that this situation is a condemnation of western civilization. Yet, further assessment of our present culture uncovers the startling condition that it would be quite impossible for an individual to read half, or even a fifth, of the books that are made available either to children or adults! The vast quantity of material that has been produced—and is annually being increased—leads us to the consideration of means of selecting the *best* of all that is published. If we are to settle for *five hundred books* for children from seven to fourteen and *seven hundred* for adults, it is even more imperative that this selection be wise and worthy of the hours spent in the reading.

In an effort to contribute constructively in this area, The University of Wisconsin, with the cooperation of several state organizations, has developed in the last four years a tool that serves as a guide

for teachers, librarians, parents, and children in the choice of worthy recreational reading material from the mountain of books published. Using the inimitable *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as a yardstick, the Lewis Carroll Shelf Award is bestowed on publications printed in the English language which appear to have enough of the qualities of *Alice* to enable them to sit beside her on the same shelf.

The Lewis Carroll Shelf Award was established in 1958 and from its conception has been unique among the numerous and valuable book honors offered. It was designed not only as a token of esteem for particularly fine publications and outstanding authors—which, of course, it is; but it also has other characteristics which give it distinction.

Interesting in itself is the name chosen for the award. The committee felt that it could find no more worthy measuring stick than a book written especially for children, yet one which affords more pleasure to adults as well; a book which has stood out as a milestone, a pace-setter, and a time-tested example of quality literature—in other words, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Even by those persons who have never read *Alice*, it is regarded as the children's classic of classics and one which has provided innumerable characters and terms to everyday conversation. It has appeared in the most amazing forms—a shorthand version, picture writing, all major languages, films, television; it has been pirated, kidnapped, reduced to com-

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mercial advertising to sell cars, political ideologies, dresses, and folk medicines. Lewis Carroll so deeply imprinted western civilization with Alice and her friends and their nonsensical remarks and actions that generations to come will need only to stick their noses into succeeding literature to sniff the essence of their presence.

The University of Wisconsin Book Conference Selection Committee identifies these measuring characteristics of *Alice* as *imagination and originality* (so tritely these days called *creativity* and applied to the most ordinary of products to have lost any preciseness the term might have possessed); *genuine emotion, consistent* (if intolerable in some cases) *characters, plausible events* even in fantasy form, and *a plot which unfolds gently and logically* (as if you were eating a piece of one of Carroll's magical mushrooms).

Beyond these criteria, the Lewis Carroll Shelf Award Committee has other explicit grounds on which to base its reliability and validity. The award nominations are annually selected by the editors or editorial boards of all children's publishing houses in the United States wishing to participate. This feature allows publishers themselves—those individuals who determine the original acceptance of manuscripts—to defend those selections, not only from the standpoint of the best seller lists, but also from the standpoint of excellence which they believed they contained at the time of publication. In this manner, some books—which for superficial reasons, many times dealing with items of number of pages, type of illustrations, or a possible small audience appeal, have been by-passed by the innumerable lists presented by the experts in schools or libraries—to be given a re-consideration for the “must-read” category. To the layman this quality of the award may not appear to be of great importance. However, it does provide a

double check for the publisher and editor and allows them to re-affirm the standards which they establish for themselves. It is one way that we have of emphasizing the trust that we, the public, have in honest, courageous publication of worthwhile material. It appears to the committee that after several more years of nominating experience, that publishers themselves will benefit from checking over their “batting averages.”

Publishers are given a free hand in their selection of nominations—no restrictions, other than that the book must be printed in the English language, are placed on them. No type of book, particular date of publication, author's citizenship, number of reprints, or number of copies sold are of any concern to the selection committee. Publishers are asked only to submit one title each year from those in publication and allow that title to come under the scrutiny of a five-member panel. Those publishers who accept the challenge of returning a book for a second nomination show an enviable courage and confidence and, even though the nomination may not win an award, the publisher has won the respect of the committee for standing by his belief.

The final selection of each year's Lewis Carroll Shelf Award books is made by a committee comprised of both men and women drawn from the ranks of editors, librarians, parents, teachers, and writers. A chairman guides the voting, admonishing the committee that a vote of acceptance by all five members is required to put the selection on the Shelf. Any book that receives three or more affirmative, yet not the required five for acceptance, is given a detailed analysis by the committee members voicing the negative votes. Should the members voting positively believe unanimously that the negative vote analysis was unsubstantial, the chairman is directed to request a second vote on the title and cast

a ballot himself, making possible the enlargement of the possible selection or rejection of the book in question.

Another unique and valuable feature of the Lewis Carroll Shelf Award is that the number of titles so honored is not limited. Only the initial selection by the publishers reflects the reliability between them and the books that will wear the Gold Cheshire Cat Seal. This oval gold seal is placed on the winning books each year at an evening ceremony during the Wisconsin State-wide Book Conference. The Shelf collection, which grows with each succeeding year and is exhibited annually to the public at the Book Conference and constantly by the Wisconsin Free Library Commission, is one of which the entire State of Wisconsin may be proud. It is a group of books not only

worthy of proximity with *Alice* but also one that would provide delight and inspiration for children anywhere they may be—in their homes, their schools, their doctors' and dentists' offices—during any of the precious moments they can steal from the busyness of their lives.

The Lewis Carroll Shelf Award offerings of the last four years are—in the eyes of the University of Wisconsin Book Conference—a tribute to the publishers and the writers who produce literature worthy of the time spent in reading, and the millions of children the world over for whom *Alice* and her Shelf companions have been created. Will you agree that they belong among those *five hundred books* a child will read?

Title	Author/Illustrator	Publisher	Date Award
<i>And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street</i>	Dr. Seuss	Vanguard Press	1961
<i>Ben and Me</i>	Robert Lawson	Little, Brown and Co.	1961
<i>Blind Colt</i>	Glen Round	Holiday House	1960
<i>Blue Cat of Castle Town</i>	Catherine Coblenz— Janice Holland	Longmans Green and Co.	1958
<i>Blue Willow</i>	Doris Gates—Paul Lantz	The Viking Press	1961
<i>The Borrowers</i>	Mary Norton—Beth and Joe Krush	Coward-McCann	1960
<i>Caddie Woodlawn</i>	Carol R. Brink—Kate Seredy	Macmillan Co.	1959
<i>Caps for Sale</i>	Esphyr Slobodkina	William R. Scott, Inc.	1958
<i>Charlotte's Web</i>	Elwyn Brooks White— Garth Williams	Harper and Brothers	1958
<i>Courage of Sarah Noble</i>	Alice Dalgeish— Leonard Weisgard	Charles Scribner's Sons	1959
<i>Curious George Takes a Job</i>	Hans Augusto Rey	Houghton, Mifflin Company	1960
<i>Five Chinese Brothers</i>	Claire Bishop—Kurt Wiese	Coward-McCann	1958
<i>Grishka and the Bear</i>	Rene Guillot— Joan Kiddell-Monroe	Criterion Books	1961
<i>The Door</i>	Marguerite De Angeli	Doubleday & Co.	1961
<i>In the Wall</i>			
<i>Hitty</i>			
<i>Her First Hundred Years</i>	Rachel Field	Macmillan Co.	1961
<i>Horton Hatches the Egg</i>	Dr. Seuss	Random House	1958
<i>Island of the Blue Dolphins</i>	Scott O'Dell	Houghton Mifflin Co.	1961
<i>Johnny Crow's Garden</i>	Leonard Leslie Brooke	Frederick Warne & Co., Inc.	1960
<i>Jungle Book</i>	Rudyard Kipling—Kurt Wiese	Doubleday & Co., Inc.	1959
<i>Lavender's Blue</i>	Compiled by: Kathleen Lines—Harold Jones	Franklin Watts, Inc.	1960
<i>Li Lun, Lad of Courage</i>	Carolyn Treffinger—Kurt Wiese	Abingdon Press	1960
<i>Little Bookroom</i>	Eleanor Farjeon	Oxford	1958

<i>Title</i>	<i>Author/Illustrator</i>	<i>Publisher</i>	<i>Date Award</i>
<i>Little Engine That Could</i>	Watty Piper— George & Doris Hauman	Platt & Munk, Inc.	1958
<i>Little House</i>	Virginia Lee Burton	Houghton, Mifflin Co.	1959
<i>Little House in the Big Woods</i>	Laura Ingalls Wilder— Garth Williams	Harper & Brothers	1960
<i>Matchlock Gun</i>	Walter D. Edmonds— Paul Lantz	Dodd Mead & Co., Inc.	1960
<i>Millions of Cats</i>	Wanda Gág	Coward-McCann	1958
<i>The Minnow Leads to Treasure</i>	A. P. Pearce— Edward Ardizzone	World Publishing Company	1958
<i>Mr. Popper's Penguins</i>	Richard Tupper Atwater— Robert Lawson	Little Brown & Co.	1959
<i>Misty of Chincoteague</i>	Marguerite Henry— Wesley Dennis	Rand McNally & Co.	1961
<i>The Moffats</i>	Eleanor Estes—Louis Slobodkin	Harcourt Brace and World, Inc.	1961
<i>Ol' Paul, the Mighty Logger</i>	Glen Rounds	Holiday House	1958
<i>Onion John</i>	Joseph Krumgold	Thomas Y. Crowell Company	1960
<i>Pecos Bill</i>	James Floyd Bowman— Laura Bannon	Albert Whitman & Co.	1958
<i>Prayer for a Child</i>	Rachel Lyman Field— Elizabeth Orton Jones	Macmillan Co.	1958
<i>A Roundabout Turn</i>	Robert H. Charles— L. L. Brooke	Frederick Warne & Co., Ltd.	1961
<i>Secret Garden</i>	Francis Hodgson Burnett— Nora S. Unwin	J. B. Lippincott and Co.	1959
<i>Snip, Snapp, Snurr and the Red Shoes</i>	Maj San Lindman	Albert Whitman & Company	1958
<i>Story of Babar</i>	Jean de Brunhoff	Random House	1959
<i>The Story of Dr. Dolittle</i>	Hugh Lofting	J. B. Lippincott and Co.	1959
<i>The Tale of Peter Rabbit</i>	Beatrix Potter	Frederick Warne and Company	1958
<i>This Boy Cody</i>	Leon Wilson—Ursula Koering	Franklin Watts, Inc.	1959
<i>Tirra Litra</i>	Laura Elizabeth Richards— Marguerite Davis	Little Brown & Co.	1958
<i>When I Was a Boy</i>	Erich Kastner— Horst Lemke	Franklin Watts, Inc.	1961
<i>White Stag</i>	Kate Seredy—Kate Seredy	Viking Press, Inc.	1959
<i>Wind in the Willows</i>	Kenneth Grahame— Ernest H. Shephard	Charles Scribner's, Sons	1959
<i>The World of Pooh</i>	Alan Alexander Milne— Ernest H. Shephard	E. P. Dutton & Co.	1959
<i>Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze</i>	Elizabeth Lewis—Kurt Wiese	Johnson C. Winston & Co.	1960
<i>The 397th White Elephant</i>	Rene Guillot	Criterion Books, Inc.	1958

Social-Class Influences upon Learning: Linguistic Implications

Allison Davis's 1948 Inglis lecture is now in its tenth printing.¹ In it he commented on the findings of sociological investigations into the effects of class-cultures in American schools, particularly in primary curricula and in methods of measurement and evaluation; the main foci of his criticism were (a) primary teaching of reading and language arts, and (b) the verbal content of "I. Q." and other forms of mental testing. Highly provocative, at some points disturbingly true, this book deserves and has received careful study by educators. But Davis's insights were seriously skewed by his own limitations in modern language scholarship, a crucial area for his research. A re-examination of his criticism from the vantage point of applied English linguistics clarifies much that is contradictory and confusing in it, and suggests the need for an organized interdisciplinary attack on the entire primary curriculum and so-called mental testing.

In certain respects, Davis's searching recommendations of 1948 may seem today to have been ahead of their time, yet if followed, they would require rigorous correction in all linguistic matters, to avoid throwing the baby out with the bath water. Davis made a determined, if confused and inconsistent, attack on the concept that language can provide a reliable basis for either developing or testing mental ability. However, *linguisti-*

cally sound language instruction would be neither sterile nor irrelevant to mental development; on the contrary, the crying need today is for a thoroughgoing reconstruction of language learnings on the basis of modern scholarship in American English, linguistics, and other pertinent disciplines. We must never forget that it is language that makes man man. In this brief discussion I shall attempt to demonstrate the seriousness of Davis's pre-linguistic bias in all language methodology, and make tentative suggestions for redesigning primary instruction in line with modern knowledge.

Probably the most fertile suggestion Davis made took the form of two questions posed as hypotheses for research.

1. Does the public school emphasize a range of mental problems and skills which is too narrow to develop most of the abilities necessary to attainment *even in middle-class culture itself?* (italics added)
2. Does the public school select a range of mental problems and skills which is so narrow that the school fails to develop much of the mental potential of lower-class pupils? (p. 89)

Following a brief exploration of these ideas, he presented the clearest and least exceptionable formulation to be found in the entire lecture.

All our findings point to the same conclusion: The greatest need of education is for intensive research to discover the best curricula for developing children's basic mental abilities; such activities, that is, as the analysis and organization of observed experiences, the drawing of inferences, the development of inventiveness. The present curricula are stereotyped and arbitrary selections from a narrow area of middle-class culture. Academic culture is one of the most conservative and ritualized aspects of human culture. Its formalization, its lack of functional connection with the daily problems of life,

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¹*Social-class Influences upon Learning*. Harvard University Press (1961).

has given a bloodless, fossilized character to the classroom which all of us recognize. For over a generation, no basically new types of mental problems have been added to intelligence tests. For untold generations, we have been unable to think of anything to put into the curriculum which will be more helpful to guiding the basic mental development of children than vocabulary-building, reading, spelling, and routine arithmetical memorizing. Even as we read this, many of us will think it absurd to suppose that reading and arithmetic are not the best activities for teaching children to solve mental problems. (pp. 97-98)

Here we have the weaknesses and strengths of the whole position explicitly indicated.

Recurring all through Davis's exposition, the pejorative "middle class," applied diligently to the linguistic materials used in standard "I. Q." tests, tends to obscure rather than clarify their sterile and ritualistic character; such test items have more to do with eighteenth-century class shibboleths, invented by Latin grammarians to befuddle the English lower orders, than with values held by any social class today.

Throughout his concluding discussion there is a confused attack on linguistic skill itself as a false standard of intelligence, or of any important mental ability (pp. 78-85, 90-94, *passim*). Davis centered his attack on what he, along with many others, calls "reading," an attack which involves an uncritical acceptance of traditional reading methods and materials as something inevitable, not subject to radical revision. Actually, his sharp comments on received practices in reading instruction constitute a biting attack on *them*—but not on the fundamental process of reading itself, which remains of enormous importance no matter how badly we teach it to our children. Davis's failure to make this distinction between the basic process of reading, on one side, and sterile methods and materials for teaching reading, on the other, biased his argument and distorted the picture he was earnestly trying

to present. (For more detailed development of my proposals, particularly regarding reading instruction, the reader is referred to three articles published in 1961.²)

One of his most perceptive observations follows:

In our schools, reading consists chiefly of learning to recognize written symbols, to pronounce them, and to paraphrase them. These trainings are carried on in the classroom day in and day out, year after year, and receive greatest emphasis from the teacher. Yet it seems clear to me that they stimulate only a very narrow range of thought-processes. (p. 91)

His attack on the alphabet-word principle of reading instruction, as opposed to teaching by larger patterns, was well aimed. Later he complained, and with good reason, that children's stories are written chiefly to teach certain words by repetition, and that *they make little sense even to the middle-class child* (p. 94). He repeatedly comes close to making the crucial point that teaching of this kind is not effective with children of any class, only to revert to his general attack on "middle-class culture" in the schools and on basic linguistic skill itself.

Davis's bias is most painfully revealed in his citation of Edward Sapir's comment on the richness and complexity of so-called primitive languages, which he used only to deprecate "skill in standard English" (p. 84). He went so far as to say, on just what evidence is not clear, that

²Carl A. Lefevre, "Reading Instruction Related to Primary Language Learnings: a Linguistic View." *Journal of Developmental Reading*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Spring, 1961, pp. 147-158.

———, "Language Patterns and their Graphic Counterparts: A Linguistic View of Reading." *Changing Concepts of Reading Instruction: International Reading Association Conference Proceedings*, Volume 6, 1961.

———, "Reading American English: A Structural Linguistic View." *Reading Aloud: 1961 Conference Proceedings of the Chicago Area Reading Association*.

the intelligence necessary to acquire skills in the English language ranks only moderately high as compared with the complex mental activity required to learn any one of several American Indian "primitive" languages! (p. 90)

But it is a linguistic axiom that *most children in every culture have mastered the basic language structures by the time they are six years old; this is hardly a matter of intelligence.*

The extent of Davis's linguistic confusion is dramatically expressed in the following statement about the six-year-old American child:

In the first grade, he learns to read "I see the boy" long after he has learned to speak and to think in complex-compound sentences, or to outwit his father or mother in family arguments, or to solve some problems in intelligence tests which his parents cannot solve! The same child who has to spend months learning to recognize those types of verbal symbols which give children most trouble—the symbols for abstract experiences, pronouns, and verbal auxiliaries—has already been speaking and understanding these same words in conversation for years!

It would seem to be a short next step to teaching larger language patterns and more advanced concepts in the primary grades.

Nevertheless, in the course of his argument, Davis's feeling against language study and linguistic ability reached a high pitch. He declared that (1) language cannot be a sound basis for measuring mental capacity, and (2) language cannot be learned except by living for a long time in the culture possessing the language. These assertions defy modern linguistic theory and knowledge of both concept development and language teaching; in any case, the evidence he presents cannot support these conclusions. (Of course the *best* way to learn French is to be a French baby and grow up to be a Frenchman, but it is not the *only* way; similarly with class dialects.)

Following is the passage where Davis makes the foregoing assertions; it is striking

for its implicit denial of the possibility of classroom learning of *any* language or dialect.

But facility in a particular language—in this case, the rarer forms of "standard English"—offers no sound basis for measuring mental capacity. Any language is a highly formalized system of cultural behavior. It must be learned by long experience in that cultural group which possesses the language. The lower socio-economic groups have a different language-culture than the higher groups. They speak various "nonstandard dialects." (p. 82)

English can be taught as a second language, however, and English-speaking children can learn other languages; it is therefore conceivable that we might also learn how to provide *in classrooms* for any serious deprivations in language development suffered by children from lower socioeconomic classes. Of course this cannot be done by snobs, nor indeed by anyone equipped only with prelinguistic tribal rites for conditioning the uninitiated. We must have new methods and materials, based on scientific research, as well as humane teaching: the two are of equal importance.

To summarize. In Davis's discussion, a fundamental bias warped his view of language so seriously as to vitiate much of what he intended to present in a constructive spirit; a reader alert to linguistic principles and insights can make correct inferences from much of what is presented, but only if he constantly weighs, sifts, and culls out facts and opinions; at best, Davis was deeply confused on many aspects of language and language learning; his use of the pejorative "middle class" tended to confuse rather than clarify the discussion. His rejection of linguistically unsound teaching and testing led him into a general attack on linguistic skill itself; there followed, then, a confusion of genuine linguistic skill and a sterile concern with "middle-class" minutiae of grammar

(Continued on page 575)

The Language Arts in Today's World

Throughout the history and formulation of the various states of this country, frontiers have always existed. A frontier behind which was found the traditional, the secure, the patterns inherent in generations; beyond that frontier was the unknown, the new, the dangers, the possible rewards. Beyond the frontier was the world of the dreamer; the new beginning, the fresh start, the testing of theories in space and concept. Our classrooms evidence our high regard for those who crossed the frontiers—Marco Polo, Columbus, Magellan, Lewis, Clark, Bridger and hundreds more. We can only imagine the lives of the thousands of followers and can ourselves only conjure the dreams of those who had the determination to forge ahead. Even today's highly glorified "Wagon Train" and "Restless Gun" leave out the dreams and the aspirations. Yet, it was upon such wisps of the imagination that our nation and indeed the world has moved ahead. As Crawford Greenawalt of DuPont states, "Behind every advance is a germ of creation growing in the mind of some lone individual—whose dreams waken him in the night while others lie contentedly asleep." We have inherited the results of these dreams. Today, the challenge of outer space has taken the place of the Alleghenies, the Mississippi, the plains, the Rockies, and the deserts. Our mass media is crammed with detailed reports of the latest achievements, the highest rocket, the largest satellite. The desire to see beyond beats as strongly today in the breasts of the dreamers as it did

a decade or a century ago. The frontiers move ahead, as do the dreams.

As classroom teachers and educators we also have our frontiers. And, as in pioneer days, there is a known past and there is a dream for the future. In our educational system we have inherited patterns, cultures, traditions, and customs. The classrooms teachers inhabit exemplify this past culture. This culture is also filled with the names of the visionaries—Barnard, Murphy, Stowe, Mann, Wiley, Herbart, Dewey—pioneers all, who had a creative urge; a desire to cross the frontier. Our professional literature is filled with the ideas and concepts of these and a thousand more. As teachers we have an opportunity to join these dreamers—these creators of ideas—these molders of the future. Although our topic here is limited to one phase of the elementary curriculum, language arts, let us extend our thoughts, broaden our vistas. Let us talk about Language Arts today but for the world of tomorrow.

The Language Needs of Today's Children. Perhaps the following paragraph, taken from *Language Arts for Today's Children* gives us some idea of the tremendous changes taking place in our world today, and the rapidity with which our lives are modified.

"Annette, at sixteen months, capers before the television set in response to the dancing of the figures on the screen. She claps her hands and cries, 'Baby.' Michael, her brother, was five before he saw a television program. Their father, aged thirty-one, had never heard a radio broadcast until he was twelve, but at twenty

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he talked to other pilots of his squadron in flight over Japan. The grandfather, now aged fifty-six, grew up in his village home without a telephone. A great aunt, who is seventy-seven did not see a movie until her children were in high school, and she had read a newspaper only once weekly until after she was a grandmother."¹

We know that the accomplishments and progress exemplified here are only indicative of the future that lies ahead. Let us examine the statements of a few of our modern-day visionaries:

"Almost any prediction will be fulfilled." Kaempfert—Science Editor, New York Times

"From the research laboratories will come marvels which will dwarf the wonders we have witnessed in the past 50 years, yes, in the past five centuries." Samoff—President of R. C. A.

"My interest is in the future because I am going to spend the rest of my life there." Kettering—General Motors Corporation

"If there is one lesson which history has taught us, it is to make no little plans but to be bold and to reach for long-range and seemingly impossible goals." Falls—General Electric Atomic Products Division

Of course the startling changes in mass communication and the equally startling changes in rapid transportation and other technological areas are only outward manifestations of other fundamental changes in our society. The shortening of distance has brought a closer communication in social life, domestic politics, and international relations. Technical developments have led to fundamental changes in our everyday lives with mass production, shorter working hours, increased time for leisure, and a standard of living that is the highest the world has ever known. Societal patterns have changed also, with the family, the Church, and the school

adapting a changing role, and our attitudes and interests, indeed our culture reflecting a changed nature of living.

Whatever educational changes we may make to meet these new challenges, complexities and anxieties of the times, the broad field of language arts has a fundamental role to play. Language as a tool and as a facet for learning has always been given a position of great importance in the formal education of youth in this country. This strong emphasis has not been without good reason, for not only is this an area of skills of great importance for unlocking new storerooms of knowledge, for communicating with others, and really a major facet of our personality, but it is an area that is difficult to master. Proper and full realization of this complexity of skills is attained only through a thorough and adequately based instructional and philosophical approach.

The Instructional Program. Teachers have studied and read more about the language arts program than any other phase of the curriculum and our purpose here is not to review instructional techniques. However, we should emphasize some of the major considerations. Let us look first at the difficulty of language. McKee summarizes the problem as follows:

"All language is symbolic. A writer never writes a meaning itself. He writes only symbols—one or more words—that stand for the meaning that he wishes to convey to the reader. No reader ever sees on the written or printed page the meaning which the writer intends to convey to him. He sees only the symbols which the writer has used to represent his meaning. Thus, written or printed words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and punctuation marks are only symbols behind which lie, more or less hidden, the meanings that the writer intends."²

Indeed the meanings are more or less hidden, as witnessed by the following ex-

¹*Language Arts for Today's Children.* National Council of Teachers of English, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954, page 3.

²McKee, Paul. *The Teaching of Reading in the Elementary School.* New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948, page 5.

amples of lack of perception on the part of the recipient of communication:

- (a) The child who was overheard saying his prayers "Oh Lord, lead me not into Penn Station."
- (b) The child who drew a picture of "Round John Virgin" in his illustration of the manger scene.

or punctuation errors from the communicator:

- (a) Thirteen girls knew the secret (,or;) all told.
- (b) Population of New York City, broken down by age and sex (try it without a comma)
- (c) She, too, eagerly awaits the spring (and *this* one without commas)

The complexity of language is evident and we can see how even a slight error can change the entire meaning. Perhaps the key to the complexity lies, in McKee's words: *symbolic, meaning, convey, represent, and intends*. Can the full meaning of the communicator ever be expressed, either vocally or on the printed page? Perhaps not, but we do have a number of vital factors which must be considered in language development and instruction. These would include:

- 1. The native intelligence and mental ability to comprehend.
- 2. An attention span of sufficient length to focus upon the communication.
- 3. A wholesome attitude, so vital to proper learning.
- 4. Sufficient background experience and breadth of contacts.
- 5. Emotional stability to face new situations and trials.
- 6. Proper environment and atmosphere for growth.
- 7. High degree of interest.

- 8. Maturity advanced to the stage being developed.
- 9. High motivation and stimulation.
- 10. A process geared to the needs of the individual.
- 11. A perceptive ability to "see behind" mere words.
- 12. Attendant physical growth and basal metabolism.

The teacher of language, and this includes every teacher, has indeed a tremendous task. When we put together the language needs and the program essentials we do have a tremendous challenge, one which does indeed call for creative dreams.

Contemporary Issues in Elementary Education. Many of our major educational groups are at present studying the implications for policy given in a bulletin entitled "Contemporary Issues in Elementary Education" as recommended by the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association. As stated in the bulletin, "There is widespread belief that American education must be more effective. Growing out of this sentiment are pressures for change in educational institutions. It is right and inevitable that these pressures have been directed in part at the elementary school."³ As Charley Weaver says, "These are my people!" *These* are our problems.

Introduction of Reading. There can be no argument as to the fundamental importance of the skill in reading and that all educators urge early acquisition of the skill. The issue here is rather one of when organized reading instruction should begin. Obviously the two matters of greatest concern here are the degree of readiness exhibited and the content of the beginning

³"Contemporary Issues in Elementary Education." Educational Policies Commission, National Education Association, Washington, D. C., page 10.

instructional program. What is readiness? We usually define the readiness program as being concerned with the development of the understandings, skills and attitudes necessary for beginning reading. This can be broken down into the areas of social, emotional, environmental, psychological, and physical readiness. Upon the results of careful analysis of attainment by the child in these areas we can begin an instructional program beginning with certain readiness skills and progressing into reading. There have, of course, been great strides in our societal interests, and our welfare institutions, all of which contribute to increased aptitude for learning. It can also be stated that children, in general, are ready to read, and need reading as a tool, at an earlier age. Can we make a basic recommendation? Probably this can be of two directions:

- (1) The establishment of kindergartens for all children, with definite programs designed to increase readiness, or
- (2) Strengthening of the readiness program in the first grade, building upon the strengths of children today. One fact is apparent, however. We cannot establish uniform policy for all pupils, but we must serve pupils in terms of their individual need.

Foreign Languages. The Second issue grows out of America's increased international activities and responsibilities which has led to an increased awareness of our limited linguistic abilities. Should foreign languages be taught in the elementary school? This is really a double-barreled type of question because of the possible aims and objectives of such a question. One type of program can be aimed toward shaping the attitudes of children toward other peoples, their culture, their mores, and their customs. Introduction of the ele-

ments of a foreign language through songs, games, recordings, and other aids, usually in correlation with a social studies unit, can help children learn about other peoples and does arouse interest in the variety of cultures and languages in the world. Such programs have always been developed by the successful teacher and no one will debate the validity of this as a part of the elementary program. However, we have *another type* program with much different goals, aimed primarily at the mastery of another language, and this does arouse considerable debate.

We have already shown that language is an extremely complicated means of expressing or communicating meaning by use of sounds, facial expression, gestures, and written symbols. The natural way to learn a language is to learn its sounds before learning its written symbols. In the case of our own language, our children take five or six years to learn to speak it, then from two to four years to learn to read and write it, and a lifetime to develop skills to a point where we have mastered them for use as a vehicle to communicate concepts. Obviously, this gives us the basic reason for beginning the study of another language at the elementary level. Now society is right in demanding results and, if the second type of program is demanded, we are right in attempting to meet the demand. However, to put this program into effect requires time, energy, qualified teachers, special materials, and a dual-language objective, not to mention motivation in terms of need.

The decision on this issue, it would appear, needs to be made on whether the community is willing to provide support, whether a basis for the selection of a particular language can be made, and which children stand to gain from a systematic and sequential program.

Departmentalization. When we consider

problems such as this we are really looking at the basic framework of the elementary school itself. Our generally accepted pattern today is, of course, the self-contained classroom, based upon the sound theory that one teacher can know the needs and interests of every pupil and can therefore do a more successful job of utilizing sound principles of learning and child-growth. Unfortunately, it is also based upon the not-so-sound theory that one teacher can have so mastered all curricular areas that she can carry the entire burden. Now it is granted that there are some teachers who, in the past, and even now, were able to do this. But, as in the past and increasingly in the future, the complexity of knowledge makes this a virtually impossible task. We begin to turn, then, to different structures. Departmentalization, particularly in the upper elementary, would not have many of the negative aspects of a decade ago; we have gained and use too much knowledge about learning. Perhaps the "teaching team" approach will allow specialization and yet still maintain the close teacher-pupil relationship we know to be so vital.

Pupil Placement and Progress. Once more we are dealing with an area allied to the basic organizational plan. Our graded structure, with its roots in the 1840's and 1860's, has been of concern to nearly every teacher caught up on the web of its machinery. The policies commission asks the question, "Should the school accelerate or hold back pupils in terms of their ability to meet a uniform standard of achievement?" We usually debate this matter in terms of nonpromotion or acceleration. Actually, if we could arrive at a satisfactory arrangement such terms, with their inherent difficulties, would lose their importance. What we really need is a system of grouping pupils so as to offer the best learning situation for each child and yet to permit pupils to progress continuously rather than

by inflexible promotion. There is probably no area in which this is more apparent than in the language arts. We probably do more already to individualize instruction in reading than in any other area but this is only one facet. The ungraded primary, indeed the ungraded school, once an idle dream, is now being attempted widely and needs to be expanded further.

Giftedness. Perhaps our greatest difficulty in dealing with this issue is the problem of recognizing giftedness. Although usually construed to mean academic talent, talents exist in abstract reasoning ability, unusual memory, artistic and creative poetry, inventiveness, physical skills, and perhaps even in a sense of humor. We must also remember that we in the elementary school have responsibility for providing the best education for every child, not just the talented, in terms of his capabilities. It has been the majority belief that the answer to this issue lies more within the "progress" issue than within this one area of exceptionality.

These issues will persist. New issues will arise. Research in education will show us many ways to attack our problems. Our dreams and aspirations will contribute to the future and to a higher development of language facility.

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(Continued on page 565)

The More We Get Together

All of us are looking for yet another way of helping the individual child expand and grow. He comes to us with needs, interests and enthusiasms and looks to us for assistance in realizing their fulfillment. We, in turn, want to do all we can to help him realize his potential but are handicapped by the numbers of children, the variety of their interests, and the lack of time. Often a different approach to the problem is the answer. Ours was to have TWO GRADE LEVELS WORK TOGETHER!

How It Began

The first graders had often shared their experiences verbally in "Show and Tell" periods! As a group they had composed experience charts and individually they had dictated stories to the teacher. All of this was very satisfying but there were twenty-three "dictators" and just one teacher. There was dire need for more "secretaries." The use of upper grade children seemed a practical solution to the problem of recording material dictated by the children.



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Talking It Over—Teachers Need Mutual Understanding

The teachers involved reviewed the learnings that might be gained by the members of each grade through a shared activity in creative writing. Fifth graders would have an experience in leadership; in guiding, helping and encouraging another person's expression. They would gain a feeling of worth through their ability to read, write and spell and a greater appreciation of the mechanics of the written word. First graders would have an opportunity to share their creative efforts through verbalization. The stories, when recorded, would provide motivation for those being introduced to reading and story material of personal interest and concern for the children able to read. Both groups would gain in confidence and ability to be part of a new relationship.

Getting Started

The idea was presented to the children in both grades and was accepted with much enthusiasm. Plans were made to go ahead with the project. The fifth graders were oriented to some of the things they might expect from the first graders. Ways of working with the shy child or the child who might have nothing to say were discussed: Tell something about yourself. Ask for their names. Remark about the room. Questions that might be asked of first grade children to draw them out were suggested: Where do you live? What did you see on your way to school? What do you do in school? The first graders, in turn, talked over the kinds of things they might like to tell. It was explained to them that the fifth graders would want to help them express their thoughts and would record them.

Since this activity took place early in the school year when children were not well acquainted, no special attempt was made to pair the children. Each fifth grader joined the first grader waiting in line to receive him and went to work.

The first session lasted thirty minutes. We had approximately fifty children working together in this way in one room. A first experience of this kind may loom as very frightening to the teacher, but soon after the children are assembled and working, it is obvious that this is a very meaningful experience to the people involved. We observed no restlessness or unpurposeful moving about, and conversation was focused on the task at hand. During this period the teachers went around the room answering questions when necessary, offering suggestions when needed, and expressing interest in the children's efforts.



Culmination

The fifth graders took the stories back to their classroom for editing. It was their responsibility to see that the spelling, punctuation and capitalization were correct. Each story carried the names of the persons on the team. When the editing was done, the papers were given to the teacher to be typed on a primary typewriter. (It was desirable to use a primary typewriter to make it easier for the first graders as they learned to read.) If the story was to be illustrated, the ditto was returned to the

child who had dictated the story so that he could add the picture. After all of the stories were completed, the groups met again to compile their books. The first graders took the responsibility for planning the cover of the booklet. Each person in each class received a copy of the book of stories. We repeated this experience four times during the year.

More to be Done

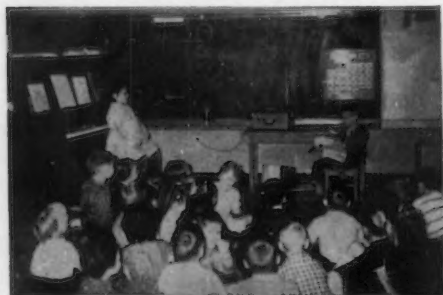
Since the two grades worked so successfully on this project, we began to look for other ways in which they might work together to develop learning skills. Soon after the initial experience, two first graders, who had some reading skills, expressed interest in finding out more about rocks. The fifth grade teacher was given this information and agreed to enlist the help of a fifth grader who was capable and would benefit from devoting time to this type of project. She described the need of the first graders for help, the area of interest and asked for volunteers. Arrangements were made for this committee to meet and make plans for study. These plans were discussed with the teachers and help given as needed. This committee met three times a week for a period of one-half hour per session. Time was given in the classroom for progress reports from the group. This encouraged others to become interested in participating in committee work. As more people became interested, other groups were formed until eventually all the first graders were involved and as many fifth graders as were needed to provide leadership. Reports were given periodically in both grades, bulletin boards were used to exhibit the findings of the various groups, visual aids were used, resource people were brought in and field trips were arranged. Various committees prepared books and charts to illustrate their work. Some of the areas studied were: rocks, animals, Japan, Russia, plants, fish

and the solar system. Some of the culminating activities were: a Sukiaki luncheon and trips to a planetarium, zoo and greenhouse. Often particular committees might go on a field trip with one of the teachers after school. When a committee had completed as much work as it could on a certain subject, it would disband or perhaps select another interest area.



Leadership Training

As time went on, leadership meetings were held with the fifth graders. These meetings were held during the noon hour. Each child brought his own lunch. Parents whose children had volunteered to attend these meetings were notified, and they wrote their consent to have their child participate. These meetings covered such things as exchange of ideas, inaugurating of new ideas, solutions to committee prob-



lems, interesting ways of reporting and improving committee work. From time to

time, the leaders and the first graders would get together to evaluate this experience and go over the things learned about obtaining and sharing information.

Evaluation

As the teachers observed this process through the year, they discussed what they thought their pupils were gaining through this experience.

The first grade teacher observed that participating in committee work led pupils to seek out books, to have high motivation for reading and to develop greater self-direction. With the help of fifth graders, they gained confidence and learned various methods of recording and reporting. The flexibility of committee grouping increased their experience in initiating new relationships with their peers and older children. We think one of the great values of this type of activity is that it removes grade level ceilings on what youngsters can learn. This experience developed skills which the first graders subsequently used with kindergarten children.

The gains of the fifth grade extended into many behavioral and skill areas. The fifth graders made use of and developed their skills in the use of language arts, particularly, written expression. Other skills gained were library skills, leadership, recording, reporting, discussing and problem-solving. Common to both groups were growth and awareness in understanding of other people, arriving at new ideas, appreciation of contributions of other people and a sense of achievement as they completed their projects.

We found this to be a meaningful learning situation with a high level of motivation

(Continued on page 579)

New Speeds of Handwriting

Ayres in 1917 (1) measured the speed of handwriting of large numbers of pupils, and set norms that are used to this day. It has been noticed by some, however, that these speeds of handwriting seem excessively high when compared with the actual time it takes a pupil to finish a written composition. Frustrations are surely to follow if a teacher or child expects that under normal conditions the rate of written composition will approximate the Ayres norms.

These differences between the norms set by Ayres and the rate at which pupils usually are able to compose written language are due probably to the procedures that Ayres used in his study. First, he had his subjects in grades five through eight read the first three sentences of Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* until they were familiar with it. These sentences were written by the administrator of the test of handwriting on the chalkboard, presumably in cursive handwriting. Then, the subjects copied these sentences until they were "familiar" with them. After this, the sentences were copied for two minutes from the model written on the chalkboard.

Reasonable objections can be made to this procedure for measuring the speed of handwriting. Why should norms of speed of handwriting be established on material that has been copied repeatedly until the writer is "familiar" with it? In addition, what constitutes "familiarity" in this case, that is, how many times should the sentences be copied by individual children before each is "familiar" with it? Looking to other tests, one would not likely learn that a pupil reads or practices in some way a reading, spelling or language usage test before tak-

ing the same test. Why then should a pupil practice handwriting a specific material before taking a speed of handwriting test on the same material? The lack of control here over the influence of practice on the test achievement seems abundantly clear. Each administrator of the test in the Ayres' study apparently was left to his own decision as to how much practice to give before the test began. Would not the actual or expected speed of handwriting of pupils as they write stories, reports, letters, etc., differ greatly in speed from the relatively artificial speed they could achieve after repeatedly copying a passage? If so, the norms set by Ayres seem to be less useful than is normally thought for establishing grade-level expectancies in the speed of handwriting.

To overcome these objections in measuring the speed of handwriting, the writer investigated the handwriting speed of 4834 middle-grade pupils by having them write the three beginning sentences from the *Gettysburg Address* under different conditions. In this writing the pupils first read the sentences written on the chalkboard by their teacher, not in cursive but in manuscript, until they were familiar with them. That is, they read the words until all the pupils could recognize them. This familiarity was more readily ascertained, of course, than familiarity gained through copying. The teacher discovered which children could not read each word during a rereading of the passage after it had been read aloud by the teacher. All unfamiliar words then were reread aloud until the teacher was satisfied that each pupil could recognize all the words. It can be seen that while a constant of word recognition of the passage by all the pupils was maintained,

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Table 1. Speeds of Handwriting in Letters
Per Minute of Pupils Studied by
Ayres and by Groff

Letters Per Minute	Per Cent of Pupils					
	Grade		Grade		Grade	
	4 Ayres	4 Groff (N=1563)	5 Ayres	5 Groff (N=1522)	6 Ayres	6 Groff (N=1749)
10-19	Not re- ported	6.8	1	3.8	—	1.5
20-29	—	25.4	2	13.5	2	5.5
30-39	—	31.5	5	31.5	3	18.4
40-49	—	21.3	12	26.0	8	27.1
50-59	—	9.9	20	12.6	14	21.2
60-69	—	3.6	22	7.6	19	12.9
70-79	—	.8	19	3.2	21	7.9
80-89	—	.3	12	.8	16	3.6
90-99	—	.1	5	.4	10	.9
100-109	—	—	2	.4	5	.8
110-119	—	—	—	—	2	.4
	M=55	M=35.06	M=64	M=40.65	M=71	M=49.65

a constant of unfamiliarity with writing the passage as a whole was maintained also. Writing the passage on the chalkboard in manuscript rather than cursive ruled out the possibility of gaining familiarity with the passage in cursive which added another constant to this procedure.

It is suggested that the speeds of handwriting resulting from the above investigation and presented in Table 1 more nearly approach the actual speeds of handwriting that a pupil can maintain under natural writing conditions than do the Ayres norms. If this is so, these speeds are more useful

and valid for determining grade-level expectancies in the speed of handwriting than are the speed norms set by the older study. In addition, in the writer's opinion, these procedures described above seem to have greater administrative reliability by removing as nearly as possible variance in the preparation of the pupil for the test. Because of these advantages, it is suggested that this procedure be used to measure the speed of handwriting rather than the procedure described by Ayres.¹

¹Ayres, Leonard P. *Measuring Scale for Handwriting*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1917.

(Continued from page 560)

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Individualized Reading vs. Group Reading I

The individualized method of teaching reading is being used in schools throughout the country, and more and more schools are thinking of trying the method. We are also discovering that some schools and many teachers have used individualized reading for many years. Everyone interested in reading should therefore understand what individualized reading implies, and the problems that arise if this method is to be used. He should also understand how it compares, in detail, with the method of group reading.

A Definition

Individualized reading implies at least five different things. *First*, the children are at their seats or at reading tables. They are not in a group before the teacher. *Second*, each child has a different book—a book that he himself selected. This is very different indeed from the group system, with each child having the same book, open at the same place.

Third, each child receives individual help from the teacher or a teacher's helper, the help that he needs just when he needs it. This is very different from the method of giving help to groups, which assumes that most or many of them need the same thing at the moment. *Fourth*, the individualized method of teaching reading always assumes a "sharing period," during which each individual child shares something of what he has learned with other children, either the whole room or part of it.

Fifth, individualized reading always as-

sumes that certain skills have to be taken up with the class as a whole, or in a group session with the part of the class which needs to learn the skill. The group method of teaching reading also uses such sessions for special skills, such as sounding skills. These "special need" groups are recommended, of course, for all teaching of reading.

Control of the Room

We know, of course, that children learn to read by many methods. Our concern, therefore is whether some one method is better than some other method, since we wish to use the best. In considering the individualized reading method, we must therefore inevitably compare it with the more general method used, the grouping method, which nearly always assumes for reading purposes, three groups of children to the room.

Since a teacher must, first of all, hold control of the behavior of her children in the room, many teachers are fearful that this new method may hinder or make more difficult the teacher's problem of control. To understand this situation fully, we must consider that there are three different methods of control, all of which are in constant use in the classroom.

Teacher control is always present to a greater or lesser extent in every room in school. The "felt presence" of the teacher keeps the children from showing conduct which might be harmful to the good behavior of the room or to the learning going on there. This teacher control is often felt to be the result of the children's watching the teacher. If the child has his eyes fixed

The late Dr. Dolch, Emeritus Professor of Education, University of Illinois, resided in Santa Barbara, California, until his death in October. This is the first part of a two-part series.

on the teacher, he feels her controlling presence. In addition, we all know that the teacher's voice plays a large part in this control. The teacher is speaking, asking questions or giving suggestions a large part of the time, some studies show two-thirds of the time. Every child in the room hears that voice, whether he is sitting before the teacher in a reading group or sitting at his desk doing some assigned task. This "voice of authority" has its effect. The practical question is, will individualized reading lessen or lose this teacher control?

We know that in the individualized reading method, the children will not be sitting facing the teacher in a group. We know that she will be giving individual help in a low voice, maybe at her desk or at a table, or in some part of the room. What about her control of the situation?

The answer to this question is, of course, *interest control*. Each child will have a book of his own choice, one he *can* read and one that he *wants* to read. The book will keep him busy. He will not want to do anything else. There will be no temptation for mind wandering, for hidden occupations, for disturbing others. If book selection is really managed rightly, interest control takes the place of the usual teacher control.

Here we might add, that under the individualized system, the teacher is freed from having to maintain group control in front or back of the room. As she gives individual help, she can look about and watch what is going on. If interest control is not working with a certain child, she can go to him and see what is wrong. This is what the teacher, even with a group in front of the room, has to do sometimes with the children at their seats. But to leave the reading group does not help morale, and under the reading group system children at their seats are usually left to their own devices. But in individualized

reading, the teacher can attend to everyone. Thus she is really released for the most effective teacher control.

A third method of control, *routine control*, works for both systems. We know that children are now trained for the group system. They know how to come and go, how to handle books, how to react in the group situation. But it is just as possible to establish routine for the individualized system. Children quickly learn how to choose books, how to read them, how to get help, and so on. Routine control is very valuable, and it works with any definite system.

Size of Class

Size of class is often brought up as a problem with the individualized system. But we must certainly ask what happens to the group system of teaching reading when there are too many in the room, say forty or more. Such a large number does one of two things. It may force division of the room into perhaps four groups. This means that each group gets only one-fourth or less of the teacher's time. It also means that three-fourths of the children are sitting at their seats three-fourths of the time, without teacher help. Such a situation results in very poor learning of reading.

The other possibility is that each of three groups will consist of one-third of forty, or of a dozen or more. What does a teacher do with a dozen children before her, all supposed to be looking at the same page of the same book? If one child reads or speaks, that means that eleven are waiting. The individual differences between a dozen children in any such group are enormous. In reading ability forty children will spread over five to seven grades. A third of them will spread over two or three grades. How can the group method work in that situation? We know that it rarely does work for every one of the children.

In contrast, forty children can be taught by the individualized method by providing more books and some added helpers. Each child still reads at his level and on his interest. His individual help can come from the teacher or from helpers who are in the same grade or a higher one.

Even if little individual help is possible, the child still learns by reading "*about his interest at his level*." He cannot help but learn under the drive of interest. So the problem of too large a class is harmful to any class, no matter what the teaching method, but it is less harmful in the individualized situation.

A Comparison on "Learning How to Read"

Learning to read actually means many specific learnings. The teacher knows this because she must teach these specific things. Therefore we must compare these two methods according to the different specific learnings that must take place.

Liking to read is the most important learning that any child can secure from the school. If the child likes to read, he will struggle until he learns how to read and to read well. If he does not like to read, he is sure to learn slowly and will never become very good at reading because he just will not practice reading. He will not follow the newspaper. He will not learn from magazines and books. In short, our efforts are fruitless unless he not only *can* read but *likes* to read.

We all know the situation with the group system. By it, great numbers of children learn to read and learn to like to read. We have many materials and methods planned to this end. But let us be frank and admit that under the group system many children do *not* learn to read. And under that system, many children who do learn how to read also learn to dislike reading. This dislike appears forceably in high school

and in college. A recent study showed that of all adults, about one-fifth said they had never read a book that they were not compelled to read. Such is a really dreadful result. So the group system may point with pride to its successes, but is must also point with sorrow to its failure.

In contrast, those teachers who have tried the individualized system report unanimately that nearly every child comes to like to read. Each child has a book he can read, and not one that frustrates him. Each child has a book that he chose himself, and not that was chosen for him. And each child can go at his own pace, without humiliating comparisons with another child who is going faster.

As a result, it is everywhere reported that children who have disliked reading change their minds. It is reported that maladjusted children change their attitudes and fit in with the group in other activities. Everywhere it is reported that the children do quantities of reading, not only the good readers but all of them. Even the good readers do more reading and make more progress because they are not held back by slower children.

On this first and most important aspect of learning to read, the individualized system seems vastly superior to the present one.

Sight vocabulary is the second basic element in learning reading. Everyone reads with his sight vocabulary, that is, by his instant recognition of the words frequently met with. To teach sight vocabulary, the standard textbooks are elaborately organized. First, the vocabulary is strictly controlled, so that new words are "doled out" a few at a time and then frequently repeated. Second, for the first three years at least the manual tells the teacher how to teach every word. So through this teaching alone, it would seem that the vocabulary used in the books

would become sight vocabulary. Third, during the reading lesson the teacher has the text read aloud one or more times, so that all the children hear the words and so could be matching the sound with the printed text.

Through these three methods, it is hoped that all the words of the first three years, or about 1,500, will be learned by every child. If this happened, we would have no poor readers in fourth grade, since 1500 words would cover most of the commonly used words of the language. But we know that somehow or other, many children do not learn the primary vocabulary as sight vocabulary. Many do not learn 1500 but only 500. Many learn less. We should surely have some study of how this happens, but our work in remedial reading tells us that it does.

The individualized method has three methods for teaching sight vocabulary (along with other things). The first of these can be called the "Reading-to-the-teacher" system. That is, as the teacher sits at her desk or at a table she calls one child after another to come up and read to her from his book. As he does so, she can tell him the words he does not know. This telling is effective for two reasons. First, he *wants* to know the word to get the story. Second, he is *told individually*, and not as one of a group.

The second method in individualized reading can be called the "Teacher-moving-around" method. That is, when a child comes to a word he cannot figure out, he raises his hand to call the teacher. He does not stop reading, however, but, with raised hand, goes on reading until she gets to him. When the teacher comes to him, he points to the word or words he has not figured out, and she can tell them to him or use other methods, in either event, adding them to his sight vocabulary if he remembers them.

A third method is called the "Help-one-another" method. This requires that student-helpers are appointed in the room or come to the room from a higher grade. These helpers tell the children who raise their hands the words they need, usually not trying to do anything but that. Or the children in the room can be so seated that each child has a helper across the aisle from him. (A helper chosen by him, and not imposed by someone else.) When the child comes to an unknown word, he puts his finger under the word, leans across the aisle, is told the word, and goes on. This "help-one-another" method is also used for "seat reading" in schools employing the usual group method of teaching reading, and it is very effective. It not only teaches reading but teaches the more important thing, that we can and should help one another.

One important point must be made about this help with vocabulary. It must be assumed that by the individualized method, each child has chosen a book that is *close to his level*. This means that there are *not too many hard words*. Ideally, there should not be more than three unknown words per page, since we know that if a child is told too many new words, he will not remember any of them. If the books chosen are too hard, skipping will inevitably result, and wrong habits will be cultivated. In comparison, as we watch reading groups, we find that many of the children meet ten to twenty or more new words per lesson. Even if they are told them all, they can't remember so many. So "a book suited to the child" is a basic rule of individualized reading.

Before leaving sight vocabulary, we should add one comment. We now know that it is not necessary to learn the common words altogether from reading in books. We know which the common words are. We know that children can learn them

by interesting games. So if the usual teaching of sight words in teaching does not work entirely with some children, no matter whether by the group method of the individualized method, we can have those particular children learn sight words through the interest of a game and therefore discover that they know them when they meet them in reading.

Guessing. Any child, when reading, may come to a word he does not know and just guess some word that fits in with the context and go on. We all know that when the teacher with a group before her says, "Read it to yourselves," many of the children do this guessing. Theoretically, they should sound out every word that they do not recognize. But many just do not know that much sounding, and others find it too much trouble. Likewise, most children are sure that they have guessed right because the word they thought of fitted in to the meaning and even began just like the word they were wondering about.

Now it is believed that in the group system, these bad guesses are caught and corrected when the children hear the passage read aloud later on. This can hardly be so because we know that many children are not paying attention, and that even if they catch the error that they made, they do not remember what the right word was. We can easily show this by having the poor readers reread any passage that has just been read aloud. So it is not realistic to assume that the group system of reading catches and corrects all wrong guesses.

In the individualized system, the children will surely do a lot of guessing. They have an interesting book. They want to know what the story is. They want to get ahead. So the temptation to "guess and go on" is very great. In this situation, there are two possibilities. One is that the unknown word will block the story

and so the child will want to find out what it says. In this case he will sound or raise his hand. Or if, at the moment, he is reading to the teacher, she will tell him or help him sound. The other possibility is that what he guesses will seem to fit in and he will go on, just as he would in any reading.

Sounding. No child becomes a reader unless he learns how to sound out words for himself. Sounding is absolutely necessary for reading from the middle grades on for the rest of life. So an important question about any system is, "Does it teach sounding?"

First, we must admit that our group reading system is a rather dismal failure when it comes to teaching sounding. Sounding is supposed to be taught in the primary grades. But we find in the middle grades that about half cannot sound, and so we have a sounding program in the middle grades. Still we find in high school that a fourth or a fifth of the children cannot sound.

This obvious failure of the regular system has caused schools to buy supplementary phonics workbooks by the millions. It has caused the development of phonic games. It has caused the use of a special sounding period all through the primary grades or later. The fact seems to be that having a small group of children sitting in front of the teacher, (the rest at the seats), going through the prescribed steps given by the manual, does not successfully teach sounding to all.

How does the individualized reading system compare with this standard system? We have said that the standard system must have a special phonics period. So apparently must the individualized system. The reason is that phonics must get special and concentrated attention. It does not get this either in group reading or in individualized reading. So under any

system let us have the special study of phonics. We also need, in any system, the special workbooks, games, charts and so on.

Aside from this use of a special period, how does the new system compare with the old? The question really is, How, in either of the two systems, is the child pushed or impelled to use what sounding knowledge he *has*, and thus be led to discover more sounding knowledge? In the group system, the pressure is caused by the teacher sitting before him, who is doubtless going to ask him to read aloud. So he must, in "reading silently," do his best to figure out the words. That is the theory. But in practice, many pupils know there is little chance they will be called on to read aloud. If there are ten to fifteen children in the group, only a few can read very much; if all are to read, they can read only one sentence. In addition, the chances are the teacher will call on the good reader and then will call on the poor reader to reread, and the poor reader can remember enough of what he has heard to "read" successfully.

In the individualized method, the pressure is almost entirely from the book. We have here the "job control" that we have spoken of. The child has an interesting book. To get the story of the facts, he must know what the book says, that is, what the words say. So the theory is that he tries to use all the sounding knowledge he has. Now we must admit that the child can skip. But the chances are that he will use the sounding *that he knows well*. We all use the knowledge that we know well. We do *not* use the knowledge of which we are uncertain. So the situation here is not much different from what it is in any reading, group or otherwise. The child will practice what he knows. This may cause him to learn new sounding principles by discovery, which is the best

learning. But most sounding will have to come in the sounding period.

Many teachers use their conferences with individual children to teach sounding. This is a fine idea, because each child needs different teaching, and this conference can adapt perfectly what one is taught. A teacher may point out just one new principle to each child. She cannot do more because of time. But does she need to do more? If each child learns every day just one new principle, and a principle that the reading demands and that he wants to learn, would not that be ideal? Soon each would make tremendous progress. For we must admit that in group teaching, much of the sounding taught is "for the other fellow," since all the children are at different points in developing sounding knowledge and skill.

Skills in reading. We all know that just "telling what you have read" is a minimum in reading that we do not wish to be our total goal. We want the children to know what they have read, and then we want them to think about what they have read in various ways which have been called "thought getting or study skills." That is, we want them to realize why certain details are given. We want them to decide what a paragraph is really about. We want them to be able to find the framework of the writer's story or discussion, in other words, to make a rudimentary outline. And we want them to learn how to appreciate.

Here we must admit that many of the kinds of thinking that we have just listed are more or less automatic with children who are interested in what they are reading. If they are interested, they will react with comments, with criticism and with appreciation. So we must not assume that a child reading alone does *no* thinking. But we also know that this kind of

thinking and appreciation can be stimulated in anyone. So how is this stimulation to be given by the individualized reading method?

In the primary grades appreciation is taught through discussion of the stories which the children report on during the sharing period. That is the time to ask questions about why we like a story, about the author's picturing, about the thoughts and feelings of the characters, and so on. The discussion by the group of one child's report will lead all the children to understand what they are to look for. Then when another child makes a report, one will immediately see that he is being guided by the previous discussion of other children's stories. So individual stories and characters are discussed by the group, and all are guided thereby just as they are in group method. This means, of course, that time must be taken for literary appreciation if one wishes literary appreciation to be prominent. Just as much time must be taken in individualized work as in group work. There is no difference.

In the middle and upper grades, there is presumed to be some special time and thought given to literature. Here it will be found that more than one child will read such a book as Robinson Crusoe. If it is "appreciated" at one sharing-time, others will want to read it. Then it will be discussed again. This does not mean that all will read the same book. The idea that any one book can be suitable for all to appreciate is no longer believed in. Attempts to get a whole group to think and feel about one book at the same time have been a dismal failure. It results very often in many of them disliking the book.

One method of developing appreciation is for the children who have read the same book to discuss it among themselves and to come to some conclusions which they report to the others. They might even

dramatize part of it. If every child is involved sooner or later in such an appreciation group, with teacher guidance, all could share the benefits and avoid the harms of reading standard books.

Of course, the whole class can study and discuss any classics that are considered desirable. Individualized reading assumes that for special purposes, group study is desirable. So this might well be one of the special purposes.

Study or analysis of study material may lead to the same kind of sharing and discussion. For instance, a child who reads a chapter on "tunnels" can well be asked questions by the others and thus all would find that in reading, you have to find out certain kinds of things, you may make an outline, you may find a summary, you can select outstanding statements, and so on. So reporting and discussing factual material during sharing time gives all the chance any group has for analysis technique.

We can very well point out, however, that there need not be too much time taken for this in reading. Are not the children taking content subjects? Are they not studying geography or science, or other subjects? Those content subjects give every opportunity for the methods of analysis or study of content material. All of the children are taking up the same material, and they are all made interested in it. Then all can learn this skill that they can learn from any reading, and do it much better than in a reading lesson.

Workbooks. Traditionally, reading has been divided into many special skills, and workbooks have been prepared to teach each one of these skills. The introductory pages of these workbooks often list ten to fifteen skills supposed to be taught by the workbook, with a few pages for each.

Some persons wish to use this idea of

practice on separate skills in individualized reading, and there is no reason why they should not do so. In fact, they can do so better than ever. Formerly, we had a whole class practice the same thing, whether some individuals needed this practice or not. With the individualized method, the teacher, in conferring with a single child, can see just what he needs and can assign him at once just the practice book or the practice pages she thinks he needs. So all practice can be adapted to the individual. For this work, the teacher can assemble a wide range of workbooks, covering many skills and many grades. Then she can assign a single workbook to a child who needs it, thus getting many children to work on many workbooks, but each with a workbook suited to him individually.

In individualized reading, will all learn the same content from their reading?

This question may seem illogical. Reading is a skill. Why do we ask about content? The reason is simple. Read the manuals of all the readers. Notice the amount of time taken up with *discussion of the content* of the reading matter. If the story is about a kind of animal, the children study about that animal. If it is about an apartment house, the children study about apartment house living. If it is about butterflies, the children study about butterflies. In fact, many persons have criticized our so-called teaching of reading as being chiefly teaching of content. They say that to listen to a reading lesson, one would hear everything else but reading.

The defense of this emphasis on content is that the standard readers are carefully built to include all features of normal child and community life. The children *need* to learn about home life, about pets, about the community helpers, and so on and on. They *need* to learn about food,

about health, about transportation, about manners, about clothing, about different races, etc. So the *standard readers are skillfully prepared curricula of material that children need to know about and to think about.*

The value of the content of readers is fully admitted. The only comment needs to be that if *all* the children of any grade need to learn this content and think about this content, why are not all the children in a room learning about it together? Why do we have "different rates of progression" which lets part of the children learn about a pet animal in September, another part of the children learn about it a month later, and another part in February, perhaps if the *content* of the readers is basic, there seems to be no excuse for separation into "progress groups," for all can "learn the content" at the same time.

Or what about the practice of adopting three basic readers for a room, and so having different sections of the children learning different content? In fact, arguments for content are arguments for "all children reading the same book at the same time." One company admits this problem and issues the same content at two different levels of reading difficulty. Other companies do not even mention it.

The argument for content has caused some teachers to have the whole room attack a new unit in the basic reader all together. It is treated as content. All talk about it. All contribute experience. All look up pictures or make trips, or what not. Then, when it comes to reading, the rapid readers are excused because they have already read the book. They go and read harder material. The slow readers are excused too and they go to read easier material. So the content of the basic is used for all as content, not as reading. This is a logical attack on the problem.

Let us turn now to individualized read-

ing. Obviously all are reading different content unless the teacher has been skillful enough to get the class to work around topics and has been able to get a wide variety of books on one topic. In that case, all are reading on the same subject. Usually, however, this is not possible. Usually all have different topics for reading.

In this case, the only possible way of getting content of the reading to more than one person is to have children tell what they have read. This can be done in small groups. It can be done to some extent for the whole room. But this is language, not reading, and the teacher immediately has to learn how to manage an oral language lesson. She must decide who is to "tell." She must manage the telling by supplying a subject such as "an interesting thing I found out," or "an exciting point in a story," or "a wonderful person I read about," or the like. She must develop standards for telling and for listening. All of this will be found in books on oral language in school. But it is not given in reading books. Without special management at this point, the "sharing" that is often used may be harmful, as it may produce only boredom and difficulty.

One third grade teacher tells her own reaction to the loss of the common content when all the children are reading individually. "I feel that the greatest loss in individualized reading is in talking about the story together, sharing ideas and experiences. Emotions shared in literature make precious moments and fond memories. I missed the laughs together over many of these stories, the concern we would have felt together for certain characters, the wisdom of young minds and opinions given candidly." That is a real lament. But one fears that it is an ideal group situation that is being talked about, not one in which some children

are twice as good readers as other, and in which some are bored and some are frustrated. Let us remember the ideal, but realize the practical.

Social Learning. Do children get social learning from individualized reading?

Here we had better be quite clear as to what the present situation is. What social learnings does the group method teach? Here we have one set of learnings arising from the use of groups. And we have another set within any group.

First, the social learnings from the division of a room into groups is very unfortunate. By this division, one group of children are labeled average, a thing which will not hurt them perhaps unless they individually think they are superior. Adults try to avoid thus being labeled as they know if they are called "superior teachers," or "superior workers" in a plant, the others immediately resent them. A barrier is set up between them and others. Are children any different? Finally, one group of children is marked inferior, and they are usually called "dummies" by some of the children. The teacher may not hear this, but the children do. And these same children often hear it from their parents and from their brothers and sisters. Ask the children themselves and you will find out all about it. Is this social situation good?

Second, if one watches a group reading lesson, what are the social learnings? If there is a friendly and skillful teacher, the children may work quite as equals, not conscious of differences in reading ability or mental ability. If the teacher is not so successful, the children are constantly comparing themselves with others, and are very conscious that "I know" and "you don't know" and so on. The essence of the situation is this comparing. There is *competition* rather than *cooperation*. And any competition may produce poor social learnings. One of the arguments

often given for having a slow group is that the poor reader is slighted in the average group and is glad to escape from this slighting by being put in a group where the others are like himself. But does he escape from slighting on the playground? And in this new group, is there not "slighting" on another scale, for the slow group are not all equally slow? Some in the slow group look down on others in it.

In individualized reading, it is said there is not this comparison and competition. This is not entirely so, for the children know who is reading a hard book and who is reading an easy book. Yet if each is enjoying himself, he is not going out of his way to make comparisons such as are inevitable if each is looking at the same page. In general, then, competition is largely avoided, and energy is released for other things.

So much for the competition side of

the picture. *But what about cooperation?* Individualized reading tends to avoid the evils of competition, but how can it provide the benefits of cooperation? With a group, teachers are often able by the group method to get a high spirit of cooperation. How can they get cooperation in individualized reading? Here we must refer to the situation mentioned a while back, that of getting several children to read on a single topic. In this way interest can be built up, and if the teacher can provide books on a single topic but at different reading levels, she can get remarkable cooperation between readers of different levels. Most rooms using individualized reading are also using units of activity or projects of some kind. These units or projects can be carried over into the reading, and so cooperation is going on, even though the various children interested in a topic may be reading different books.

(Continued from page 555)

and usage, where the objectionable points are nothing more nor less than archaic class shibboleths. *The profound importance of language in all human thought and culture, and especially as a basis of conceptual thinking, was thus ignored and denied;* the author assumed that language arts teaching—of reading in particular—cannot be radically improved, an assumption that finally turned the whole discussion against native language teaching and learning in the first few years of school.

Suggestions. It seems likely that what

is needed first of all is research and experimentation to provide:

- (1) linguistically based language arts and reading methods and materials for our primary and early elementary school children;
- (2) radical improvements in methods and materials for supplying important language experience and drill not given to lower-class children at home before they enter school;
- (3) thorough redesign of all primary methods and materials so as to provide the concepts needed in reading instruction and instruction in all other basic subjects.

An interdisciplinary attack would probably be the most productive.

Seventeen Qualities of Original Writing¹

Original writing may be defined as a form of writing which is individual, novel, or unusual. One criteria is uncommonness which is considered to be an element appearing with statistical infrequency in a particular population sample. For example, one child author spoke of a boy who had a golden halo around his head but carried a sling shot in one hand. This combination of ideas appeared only once in a sampling of 5000 children's original stories read by the writer. Therefore, it is highly original according to this definition.

A survey of several professional publications between the years of 1929 and 1959 has indicated at least seventeen possible qualities of original writing. Doubtless there are many more. Some of the qualities or related factors are: (1) novelty or freshness, (2) individuality, (3) a personal quality revealing the self, (4) emotion or feeling, (5) "becomingness," related to identification, (6) imagination, (7) a recombination or restructuring quality, (8) an abstractive element consisting of finding the essence, (9) immediacy, (10) dynamic vitality, (11) curiosity, (12) reservoir of experiential data, (13) perceptive sensitivity, (14) flexibility or versatility, (15) symbolism, (16) coherent unity, and (17) an expressive-communicative element.

In most stories, written by young children, novelty is shown through unusual titles for stories, novel names for persons

or scenes, an unusual style or dialogue, or an unusual beginning or ending of a story. In addition to this, children invent novel uses of punctuation and writing in order to express mood or feeling. Several pupils use wiggly writing to express fear and sometimes exclamation marks are used to show strong emotion. Children also create new words, express novel ideas, invent odd mechanical devices, and use picturesque speech. One child invented an automatic diaper-changing machine; another wrote about an atom-powered stone slab for dinosaurs.

The second element of originality is that of individuality, the quality indicated by Davis and Havighurst when they spoke of the "electric charge of hot individuality which separates one atom of mankind from another, and sends it spinning along its infinitesimal course." (4:31) It is this individual style which causes a writer to be known as a Poe, a Hemingway, or a Thurber. This individual quality is seen in the writings of a young child who spoke of trees being so high:

They will put God's eye
Out with their leaves. (6:31)

A third quality of originality listed above is the ability to express the self. As expressed by Thornley (10:529):

A creative writer has to learn the hard way that when he uses a word like "beautiful," he is describing himself, not the noun he attaches it to. That is a very difficult discipline to learn. It takes *special* time and place and condition.

This quality was expressed by a little five-year-old girl who said (6:6):

I'm tired
Tired as the lazy stones
That are always sitting down.

¹This article has been based on a doctoral dissertation, "Stimulating Children in Grades Four, Five, and Six to Write Original Stories," University of California, Berkeley, June, 1959.

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The fourth quality of original writing in this list has been termed "becomingness," which is spoken of as identification by some writers. Sitwell offers a clear concept of "becomingness" in the words (9:127):

In a notebook I published some years ago, I have a quotation about a painter who, painting a tree, *became* a tree. This condensation of essence, this power of becoming a tree, helped to make Dylan Thomas a great poet.

This quality was also indicated as a form of identification in the previous quotation by a young child who actually felt that she was a part of the "lazy stones."

Another important aspect of original writing is emotion or feeling. As stated by Wolfe (13:429):

When a boy or girl feels deeply, eloquence appears as if by magic, if only a phrase, a metaphor, a sentence. Eloquence is the sure concomitant of pouring-forth of the immense well of feeling.

One little eight-year-old girl wrote furiously about her brother, Elwood, who called her "Jerky," and fought with her when her mother was away from home. She wrote eloquently about her personal problems.

A sixth element of originality is imagination. This term has been used in many ways. This is a quality which seems to be quite prevalent in the writing of young children. Before common talk of space travel, one child wrote an imaginative letter to "Mother Earth." She spoke of the "Battle of Hunkie Dunkie" on the moon and addressed her letter from Moon City, X, Y, Z, as these initials represented moon states of "Xisis, Ysisis, and Zizis." She devised lethal machines such as "Hicky-gyros," and "Mono-auto planes," and dated her letter "December 12, 1957, A.D.S.C.," representing "after the Death of Santa Claus." (8:102-103)

Seventh, an original writer needs to have an ability to restructure or recombine

elements of his experience. He utilizes data from his experiential reservoir and recombines ideas into many different combinations. For example, Whitman in one simple line "And that a kelson of creation is love," expressed the steadfastness of love through the image of a timber bolted to the keel of a vessel (12:66). Young children glimpsing calla lilies or sweet peas, recombined ideas into new wholes when they said: "Calla lilies are white cups . . . with yellow drinking straws," or Sweet peas . . . are wearing pink ruffles . . . freshly ironed." (3:394-396)

In the list an eighth element of original writing consists of the ability to find the essence in experiences. It consists of the skimming off of unessential words and ideas and the selection of the most appropriate ones. It is also an ability to sense a relatedness of things. As expressed by Sitwell (9:127):

An initial feeling of strangeness in poetry may, also, be due to our attempts to pierce down to the essence of the thing seen, producing or heightening the significance by discovering in it attributes which at first sight appear alien, but which are acutely related, by producing its quintessential colour (sharper, brighter, then that seen by an eye grown stale), and by stripping it of all unessential details.

For example, eight-year-old Carol found the essence in a rain storm when she said (1:18):

Thick as hail, the driving rain
It comes on my window sill
And makes little dots
Like no-colored dotted swiss.

A ninth element of original writing given above is immediacy of experience which refers to a direct relationship or closeness to experience. The sweet peas, calla lilies, and driving rain were close to the child authors when they described them. Don Wolfe wrote of this immediacy of experiencing in the words (14:459):

..... crystallized impression of the life of the moment when the pupil writes like Wordsworth with his eye on the object, and the language is heightened because his emotions are involved.

Original creative writing also may have a vital, dynamic quality. Vitality is sensed when language is used in a dramatic forceful manner. This quality of vitality was felt by Beverly who wrote (2:233):

We search for what is *real*, for something which proceeds from a definite moving idea. We are looking for vitality, for that touch of individuality, of personality, which lends significance and charm to what we are, for most of us, the commonplaces of life; perhaps, we should say rather that it reveals this significance.

In young children's writing vitality is expressed frequently when children write in a dramatic staccato style such as:

It's the ninth inning, folks! Duffy is up. He hits the ball. The grandstand is excited. The ball goes over the fence. It's a nice one. Oh, it's a foul! (8:169)

Another possible factor in originality is curiosity, or an "open-awareness to the world." It is the quality which causes the creative person to consider each sunrise or sunset individually. As Hayakawa expressed it: "sunset₁ is not sunset₂, flower_{1,000,000} is not flower_{1,000,001}, baby₁₀₀₀ is not baby₁₀₀₁." (5:9) This quality of curiosity together with one of philosophical speculation is seen in the writing of young Jeane who in "A Short Life" wrote (8:50):

Oh, it does not seem fair to me
How short a morning-glory's life can be
And a person's life can be so long,
Oh me! Oh my! It seems all wrong.

A twelfth quality of originality might be termed the possession of a reservoir of experiential data. As Uzzell expressed this (11:14):

That which makes one writer's style different from another's is not his intellectual grasp of grammar and rhetoric; it is much more his quality of mind, his life experience, his habits, his nervous energy. . . .

Goethe displayed collections of engravings, etchings, drawings, autographs, coins, plaques, majolicas, plaster casts, minerals, plants, nearly four thousand fossils, and a skeleton. He was interested in art, literature, and science. Such persons as Goethe, Coleridge, and Dickens were original writers who used a vast quantity of experiential data.

A thirteenth possible quality of originality is a perceptive sensitivity to the environment. The successful writer needs to have this sensitivity to people, to the environment, and to relationships between people and the environment. White had this perceptive sensitivity to the natural world. He spoke of red-starts shaking their tails and "moving them horizontally as dogs do when they fawn." (7:76). An older child had this perceptive sensitivity when she spoke of fog (8:124):

Mysterious, uncanny and silent,
Clammy, threatening and pliant—
I trail morbidly—enveloping everything I come upon, . . .

Other elements of original writing include: flexibility or versatility, symbolism, the structural-formative element, and an expressive-communicative quality. Flexibility refers to a versatility of style and word usage, an abandonment of the cliché and worn-out simile. Symbolism is the use of symbols in a new refreshing way such as the symbols used by a child who spoke of workmen fairies and elves carrying "a tomato to tint the clouds of day." (6:26). The structural or formative quality consists of a creative pattern or unified form for the creation. Individual elements in a story may be highly original, but if they appear in an unrelated, bizarre way, the originality lacks vitality and unity. The expressive-communicative quality is the one which causes a mood, feeling, or symbol to be communicated effectively to the reader.

These are seventeen overlapping descriptions of original writing. It is hoped that they will clarify originality and differentiate original writing from the more general term of creative writing. One example of original writing written by a fourth grade elementary child is "The Stupid Dragon":

Once upon a time there was a young dragon, but he was very stupid because he was always playing hookey from Monster Academy. It was a very sad case because he didn't even know how to breathe fire; instead, he breathed water.

Finally, his mother began to get worried and called the truant dragon, but when he got there, the stupid dragon breathed water on him, and put out his fire. More and more important people came, but none of them could find out what was wrong with him.

I guess he was just plain lazy.

Originality is shown through the novelty of the idea of putting a dragon in school. Novel elements include: monster academy, playing hookey, breathing water instead of fire, being a truant dragon.

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(Continued from page 563)

because the children were deeply involved in the initiation, planning and evaluation of their experiences.

Our observation leads us to conclude that this type of organization can effec-

tively individualize the learning experiences of youngsters and thoughtful evaluation will cause them to continue to build on total learning skills and to improve human relations.

Should We Teach the Short Story?

I have a question—a challenge, for English teachers in the upper elementary and junior-high schools. Why is it that the short story, one of the most popular forms of written composition, is so seldom used as a medium of written expression in the schools?

Imagination, a sense of wonder, love of nature, the ability to ape a character or dialect, a natural aptitude in cutting away unessential details—who will deny that these are the strong points in our students' writing. These are also the prerequisites of the writer of fiction. Why, then, do so few English teachers teach the writing of the short story?

Don't say it can't be done. It can. I've done it over a period of years with classes of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students and I've had just as much success with the short story as I've had with simple poetry, the expository paragraph, and the more traditional forms of creative assignments.

As a help to teachers who may desire to accept my challenge to attempt the writing of a short story at this grade level, I offer the following suggestions. First, give the assignment as a challenge. Second, give the student plenty of time for the assignment—at least three weeks. Third,

do not give the student too many details on the mechanics or techniques of the short story. At this grade level, that would only lead to confusion and the loss of spontaneity. Perhaps the following pointers would be sufficient.

1. Present the story through the eyes of any one of your characters—as he saw it.

2. Don't tell your readers anything—show them through the words and actions of your characters.

3. Make your characters be true to themselves. Use their action and words, not yours. Use dialogue wherever possible.

4. Determine the line of your plot and deliberately avoid including any incident, any word, which does not advance the plot. In general, try to introduce the problem, the setting, and the main characters within the first one-hundred words. As the story progresses three to five incidents should occur to complicate the situation until the climax is reached. At the climax the main character should make some big decision which leads to the rather rapid solving of the situation and its complications. The story should close on a note similar to the one on which it began, but with one big difference. The problem is solved and the reader satisfied.

Following these directions, the grade school child can handle the short story form as well as he can manage the more traditional English assignments.

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Aliveness--Then Retention

The teacher's objective for the retarded is to secure a retainable reading interest over an adequate period of time to effect retention.

It is a noticeable fact that a new venture can be presented to a mixed group of children with the retarded child, seemingly, showing the same keenness at the onset as the average child. The difference between the two groups is the fact that alertness may be only surface deep with the slower child.

In reading there are numerous ways to bolster enthusiasm after it has been motivated. One very practical procedure is that of tying in remedial reading with holidays and special occasions. This can be done consistently throughout the year with a dual approach—that of presenting fresh interest simultaneously with the use of remedial lessons.

After the teacher has diagnosed the cause of reading failures, she may then apply the needed remedial work. There may be such deficiencies as lack of word skill, phonics or inability to grasp thought content.

To stimulate the lessons, use can be made of the holiday spirit aroused by the class as a whole or through social contacts. The enthusiasm kept alive will carry over as an incentive for the slower group.

Creative sentences can be made about the special occasions that arise during the school year. With programs on the radio and television and posters displayed in schools, libraries and stores, a natural interest will be felt by the children. An occasional nature topic should be interspersed to balance the program.

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Historical events also afford an opportune time to use the lessons effectively. The slow learner oftentimes is deeply interested in historical facts. The story can be developed using their word level. After reading, he can participate in discussion and thus feel a part of the regular class.

The following teacher-made sentences are examples of the two-fold approach in presenting lessons. Three phases of reading needs are stressed: thought development, applied phonics and word repetition.

Following are lessons which may be used in November, December, and June. Similar lessons may be developed for other months of the year.

November Lessons

Part (A) makes use of a holiday theme with a remedial phonics lesson.

A Give Thanks—Phonics—Diagram *th* (voiced)
Diagram *th* (voiceless)

Thanksgiving will soon be here. Children will give thanks. *They* will thank God. *They* thank their mothers. *They* thank *their* fathers. Sister will thank brother. Brother will thank sister. Together they give thanks.

Part (B) makes use of a special occasion with a thought-provoking objective.

B A Book Nook—Thought analysis.

It is fun to have a book nook. A book nook is a place to keep books. It will be a small place. It may be in one corner of the room. Place a table in your nook. New cover all your books. Cover the books with waxed paper. Put your books on the table. You will need a chair. You may need a light. Make bookmarks for your books. Keep the book marks in a box. Make a turkey bookmark. In your nook you may have funny books. You may have story books. You may have animal books. Let other children look at the nook. Let other children read your books. Keep all your good books in the nook. Retention check—Tell how: to make a book nook. To keep book covers clean. To mark your place in a book. To be polite to other children.

Part (C) uses a historical subject with a word drill remedial aim.

c Man of the Woods—Words (helped-lived-woods-back-hunter-born-hunt.)

Daniel Boone *lived* in the *woods*. He was a *back woods hunter*. He loved to *hunt* in the *woods*. He cut his name on a *back woods tree*. Boone was taken by the Indians. He saw how they *lived*. This *helped* Boone. It *helped* him with the Indians. A little boy was *born* in the *woods*. He was the first white boy *born* there (Kentucky). His father was Daniel Boone. Would you like to live in the *woods*?

Repetition is an important factor in teaching the retarded, if persistently illuminated with new interest. When it is allowed to become tiresome drill, learning will be hindered.

The lessons should first be presented as group work. Later, hektograph copies of the daily stories may be used to make individual booklets. The booklets make nice gifts for the mothers. Manuscript writing is preferable for both the group work and individual booklets.

With practice the teacher will become skillful in creating lessons to supplement the basic text or where additional work is required to "clinch" a reading skill.

December Lessons

Part (A) makes use of a holiday theme with a remedial phonics lesson.

a C Is for Christmas—Hard sound of C as (K). Soft sound of C as (S).

1. Christmas is coming. Come, Come, Come! Hear the sound of S or K. 2. A sound of K in candy canes. Candy canes so good to eat. 3. SS - sss! A sound of S in cellophane. Cellophane of red and green. Around the Christmas toys. 4. The sound of K in candle. A big red Christmas candle. 5. SS - sss! A sound of S in nice. A nice big box of ABC blocks. 6. A sound of K in cry. A mama doll that cries. 7. SS - sss! A sound of S in circus. Circus toys for girls and boys. 8. The sound of K in clown. A tricky, tricky Mr. Clown. 9. SS - sss! But best of all! You must not miss. The sound of K in Claus. Our dear old Santa Claus!

Part (B) makes use of a special occasion with a thought-provoking objective.

b All in One (Silent reading followed by storytelling or action play.)



1. Mother Low said, "Today we will buy our Christmas tree." 2. Mary and Chris went to the store with their mother. They looked at the Christmas trees. Mary wanted a small fir tree. Chris wanted a big pine tree. What would mother buy? Mother Low looked at the small fir tree. Mother Low looked at the big pine tree. Then Mother Low looked at a spruce tree. It was not a little spruce tree. It was not a big spruce tree. Mother Low said, "The spruce tree is just the one." The children looked up. The children laughed! Mary said, "Mother wanted a tree for all." "Christmas is the time to give," said Chris. How happy the children were with their - all in one - Christmas tree.

Part (C) is based on historical Bible facts with a word drill remedial aim.

Part c The Star  (pre-primer level). (Camels - moved - stopped - move - wise - star).

Camels *move* over the sand. They look like ships. The three *wise* men rode *camels*. The *wise* men looked. They looked at a *star*. It was a pretty *star*. The *star moved*. The three *wise* men *moved*. The *star stopped*. The three *wise* men *stopped*. Where had they *stopped*? Why had they *stopped*?

The June lessons are developed extensively. Each lesson might have three parts:

(a) thought development; (b) applied phonics; and (c) word repetition. For five different lessons I have developed the following parts:

1. Play Circus
 - (a) Thought development
2. Flag Day
 - (b) Applied phonics
3. June Sounds
 - (b) Applied phonics
4. Stars and Stripes Fly
 - (b) Applied phonics
5. Fun Days
 - (c) Word repetition

Play Circus

A Thought Development

Story: Silent Reading

1. Would you like to have a play circus?
2. First, make a small tent in the back yard.
3. Place boxes for seats in the tent.
4. Make signs for your circus.
5. Mark a big ring on the ground.
6. Let each child give an act in the ring.
7. Use a record player for music.
8. One boy may like to be a clown.
9. One boy may like to juggle balls.
10. Dress your pets for the circus.
11. The pets may do tricks.
12. Ask other children to come to your circus.
13. A play circus is great fun.

Comprehension check: Ability to discuss plans for making a play circus.

Flag Day

B Applied Phonics

Story: Things To Do

Part I (Find a long vowel sound in each underlined word.)

1. June 14 is Flag Day. _____
2. Put the flag where we can see it. _____
3. How many red and white stripes are in the flag? _____
4. Count the stars in each row. _____
5. Play a marching game and use the flag. _____

Story: Flag Rules

Part II (Find a short vowel sound in each underlined word.)

1. Every school should have a flag. _____
2. Men should take off their hats as the flag goes by. _____
3. Do not wash the flag when it gets dirty. _____
4. Do not let the flag touch the ground. _____
5. Take the flag from the flag pole before the sun sets. _____

June Sounds

B Applied Phonics

Word list—clear trees sings lake pen
fall tune mitten another stream

(Find a word that rhymes from the list)

1. The sounds in June
Keeps all in _____
2. The buzz of bees
In flowers and _____

3. Humming bird so very small
Hum your tune from now 'till _____
4. Cluck! Cluck! Mother hen
All around the chicken _____
5. In the daytime, I like to dream
And listen to the swishing _____
6. The grasshopper's wings
Makes the tune he _____
7. Quack! quack! For goodness sake
Take a swim in the _____
8. Mew, mew, mew says baby kitten
Lost his mother, but not his _____
9. A red bird sings
his song of cheer
As notes ring out
so plain and _____
10. You think it's one bird—
then the other
It's just the mocking-bird
imitating _____

Stars and Stripes Fly

B Applied Phonics:—Consonant Blends
(ST) (FL)(Underline *st* and *fl* sounds)

1. Jane and Don took a walk down the street on Flag Day.
2. They saw a large flag flying from a flag pole.
3. "The Stars and Stripes are flying high," said Don.
4. "Each star stands for a state," said Jane.
5. They saw one flag hanging on a staff.
6. Mrs. Brown had a small flag on a stand.
7. "I hear the band playing 'Stars and Stripes Forever,'" said Don.
8. They stopped at the band stand.
9. The people were standing to salute the flag.
10. It was a Flag Day program.
11. Don and Jane stayed for the program.

Fun Days (Pre-primer level)

C Word Repetition

trip	take	fun	woods
summer	counted	pretty	

1. What do you do on fun days?
2. Jill went on a trip.
3. Jay went on a trip.
4. They took a trip to the woods.
5. Jill looked at the pretty trees.
6. Jay looked at the pretty birds.
7. Jill counted five green trees.
8. Jay counted five red birds.
9. The red birds sat in the green trees.
10. A trip to the woods is fun in summer.



The pressures and challenges of the times make 1961 a particularly crucial period for the Elementary Section of the National Council of Teachers of English. To Elementary Section members of the Council, the services which are provided through membership make it possible to be informed and to unify efforts toward developing boys and girls to have command of their language and pleasure and joy in using it.

During the last two years, a number of activities have been launched which hold promise of success.

Committees

The following committees have been established for the production of much needed bulletins:

Children's Literature—Old and New
Writing for Children in Grades 4-8
Making Books Available for Children
The Creative Language Arts
The Intercultural Book List
Adventuring With Books, 1964 Edition

These committees all are active and alive, and are producing.

New Venture

In May 1961, a cooperative agreement among the American Council on Edu-

cation, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and the National Council of Teachers of English to produce a *New Reading Ladders for Human Relations* was arranged which will result not only in a contribution to the profession but has distinct advantages for NCTE.

Members will want to be on the alert for the announcement of the publication of this very important resource for human understanding.

Continuing Features

The Pre-Convention Workshop, the 1960 edition of *Adventuring With Books*, and *Elementary English* continue to receive recognition for quality.

Needs for the Future

The greatest need for the future is that of increasing the membership of the Elementary Section. Some of the means for accomplishing this objective follow:

- Continuing the efforts of recent years to provide first-class programs for elementary people during the Convention
- Continuing the high quality of *Elementary English*
- Providing a consistently adequate publication of bulletins dealing with practical solutions to the problems of teaching and learning in the language arts
- Considering attractive membership dues for elementary school staffs
- Encouraging members to take on the responsibility for publicizing helps avail-

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able through NCTE; e.g., many members teach summer courses and workshops at various universities. Publications Lists and sample publications always are seized avidly by participants with whom I have worked.

Appreciation

As I terminate my chairmanship I have thought often of the wonderful opportunities for professional growth I have had as a member of the Executive Board. I have been particularly fortunate for my chairmanship has spanned the presidencies of four distinguished educators whose wisdom, skill, and fine human qualities have meant much to me: Joe Mersand, Ruth Strickland, Harold Allen, and Bob Carlsen. I have had the good fortune to have the support, encouragement, and friendship of two outstanding executive secre-

taries—Nick Hook and Jim Squire. And, finally, I have experienced the change in editorship of *Elementary English*, with the excellent work of John DeBoer turned over to the most promising Bill Jenkins.

A Challenge

To elementary staff members seriously concerned about the world in which boys and girls of today are growing up, there can be no more significant challenge than making sure that the skills and arts of communication through the English language are well established. I heartily urge special effort from each member of the Elementary Section to recruit others who will strengthen our organization and profession and to participate actively in the wide range of activities sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English.

The Wind in the Grass

Today I went out from the farm
To see the wind a-blowing.
Blowing over the apple trees.
Blowing over at a slight breeze.
Blowing through the grass so high.
Oh! what a beautiful sight for the eye.
Blowing 'till all the wind dies.
Then I seem to hear all the trees' sighs.
Do they not know the wind is their friend?
Or do they not know the wind will never end?
As I lie in the grass I wonder
Can the wind be my friend?
And I hope the wind will never, never end.

TERESA WILLIAMS

Grade 4, Age 9 years

Montebello (Calif.) Unified School District

Teacher: MRS. FAWN LARSEN

Idea Inventory

One of my favorite books is *The Junior Book of Authors*, edited by Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft (N.Y.: H. W. Wilson Co., Rev. 1951). As it sells for only \$3.50, comparatively low for a reference book, I bought my own copy. Rose Fyleman once said: "To be a successful writer of poems for children you have to be a *certain type of person*." I love that type of person, so reading autobiographical sketches of writers of children's books is the next best thing to knowing them personally.

Some of the sketches offer good suggestions for the teaching of English, such as this written by Howard Pease, author of *Heart of Danger*, *Secret Cargo*, *The Tattooed Man*, etc. He tells about a story he wrote when he was twelve years old in Stockton, California.

One day my sixth-grade teacher said, "This is Friday afternoon, our free period. How would you like to write short stories? All those in favor?"

Hands swung aloft. One girl pupil remarked, "That might be fun, Mrs. Gaines, but how in the world do you do it?"

Our teacher had come prepared; she had forty pictures clipped from magazines, many of them advertisements. She held up a picture of a camel caravan crossing the desert. "Who would like to write a story about this?" she asked. A boy held up his hand and received the picture. My hand did not go up until I saw a picture of a steamer heading into a storm at sea . . . At the end of the term we printed a little magazine

filled with our work, and that is how I still happen to have a copy of my first short story. . . "Turn Back, Never!"

Mrs. Gaines must have been a first-class teacher, as Howard Pease adds, "From that same teacher I acquired a conviction that has never left me: Writing is a craft to be studied and practiced and learned."

Many of the 289 junior authors included in the book credit their parents' love of books, beginning with Hans Christian Andersen whose father, a poor cobbler, read to him from the plays of Holberg and from *The Thousand and One Nights*. Mary Jane Carr, author of *Children of the Covered Wagon*, says that her father, an attorney, used to read to his nine children on winter evenings. "He read both poetry and prose, always from the classics, and long before I was able to understand the meaning of the words, I loved the rhythm and music of poetry."

Florence Crannell Means, daughter of a minister, said her family were all bookworms "Our favorite family evenings were spent with Father reading aloud while Mother mended, Sister embroidered, and I drew. With us all, books came before clothes and such things."

Katherine Milhouse of *Egg-Tree* fame reports that there were no libraries in the little New Jersey camp-meeting town where she spent her childhood, "but my mother managed to assemble one by buying up bargain sets of books on her rare trips to Philadelphia. I read all the books of all the sets."

Mrs. Mortensen has degrees in English from Smith College and Columbia, with special work at the University of Iowa, New York University, and Drake University.

More than one author has remembered the old *St. Nicholas League*, which is proof that badges and seeing one's efforts in print are a real incentive to young writers. Jeannette Covert Nolan says she was only nine when her poem was awarded a silver badge by the *League*, a badge which she still cherishes. Reading that some of the other children were much younger than she, she had a dreadful fear that she had perhaps postponed launching her literary career too long. There was some quality that the *St. Nicholas League* inspired in children that seems lacking in modern publications.

Helen Ferris was also the daughter of a minister. She recalls their frequent moving days and what a problem all their books were. "There was never any questions, however, but that they must be taken along." When she was "eleven years, three months" her first published writing was in the *Wisconsin Audubon Magazine*.

Laura Benet is the exception to the rule that authors begin to write in childhood. Her famous brothers, William and Stephen, did write as children, but she herself did not scribble until college days. Moving from post to post as children of a regular army officer, she says their first lessons were with their mother, a delightful teacher.

All the authors agree that one does not write *down* to children. William Heyliger says, "There is no such thing as writing down to the boy; a man is fortunate indeed if he can write up to him. For he represents an audience more emotionally responsive than any other audience in the world. I try to reach the boy's emotions." He goes on to say that he began as an idealist and continued to be an idealist. "This world of ours, often glorious, often sordid and stupid, can do with a few ideals."

Agnes Danforth Hewes was brought up in Syria as the daughter of missionaries

and up to the age of twelve was taught at home. "It was those first twelve years of mine that are responsible for my writing." That is because she loved Syria so much, and in her writing she wanted American children to love it, to see it with her eyes.

Jean Bothwell, too, was the daughter of a minister, and she says the many guests from all over the world who visited the parsonage and made speeches in the church made strange foreign people very real to her. She says, "My beginnings in writing seem a little misty. I liked doing themes, and a fresh sheet of paper, with nothing written on it, still gives me a nice feeling. But even better I liked reading and became the child I was momentarily reading about."

Will James of *Smoky* fame was born in 1892 and died in 1942. He somehow missed school as his mother died when he was a year old, and his father, who trailed long-horns from Texas to Montana, followed her three years later. His foster father was a French Canadian trapper. Will James said, "I've never had no school education and I've never sketched nor painted from life; I only draw and write from memory and what I've seen and experienced myself. . . . The trapper had taught me how to read and write a little and I'd picked up some more on that through some old magazines I'd found at different cow camps. I finally decided to try writing on a bet that my story wouldn't sell." He lost his bet, for his story sold to one of the biggest magazines. Which shows that genuine enthusiasm and personal experiences in childhood are often the stuff stories are made of.

Unschooling authors are the exception rather than the rule. Elizabeth Gray Vining recalls her days at Germantown Friends School, "that four-square old school under the shadow of big walnut trees on the

edge of the Meeting House grounds, that gives so much to its children and wins in return from them such deep and lasting affection and loyalty."

Imagination is strong in writers of historical books such as Alice Dalgliesh, who says that during school vacations as a girl her biggest thrill of all was to visit the places that made English history really mean something. May McNeer says that all her writing is historical. "Why that is I do not know except that I get so much pleasure out of working with the past and trying to make it interesting to young people of today." Enid Meadowcroft says history had seemed pretty dull stuff to her when she was in school, but when she began teaching young children herself, she found history fascinating if told in a way they could understand it.

James Daugherty credits his father's companionship with his ability to write and draw. He admits he disliked his public school experiences.

Throughout my youth my father and I were inseparable companions. He was instinctively a scholar and had graduated from the University of Michigan. A splendid reader "outloud," he poured the whole stream of English and American literature from Chaucer to Mark Twain into my enraptured childish consciousness, during long hours, even days, while I drew pictures as the splendour rolled by.

These examples all show that reading "outloud" makes a deep impression if the reader has a good voice and love of words, and that a writer for children, as Rose Fyleman has said, is a *certain type of person*.

Rain

When I am tucked away in bed,
And clouds, they are above,
I hear the rain right overhead,
The pit-pat that I love.

The pitter-patter on the roof,
The splash on window pane.
The barking of the neighbor's dog,
These things are said by rain.

And in the morning when I wake,
And don my coat and hat,
I go and see the rain and talk,
With a splash and splat.

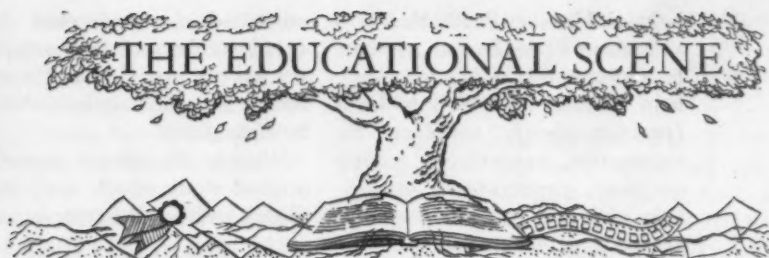
I pick the worms from puddles deep,
And sail my brand new boat.
I blow the sail and give a shove,
And then I watch her float.

And when I'm back in bed again,
I hear upon the pane,
I hear upon the roof and walk,
I hear my friend the rain.

CINDY BROWN
Grade 5, Age 11
Harper School, Wilmette, Illinois
Teacher: IRMA PARRY



Dr. Wolfson



Self-Contained and Open

Many different ways of organizing classes in the elementary schools are being suggested in an effort to meet some of the current needs of our society or to meet some recent criticisms of education. The value of these various plans is difficult to assess amid the confusion of terms, purposes, and practices.

Much has been written about the self-contained classroom, the ungraded elementary school, departmental organization, and team teaching. Unfortunately some of the terms we use lead to distortions of ation for Supervision and Curriculum De-

In a pamphlet published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development,¹ the concept of the self-contained classroom is examined, its potentialities explored, and its values discussed. At the very outset the point is made that "The self-contained classroom plan does not negate the need that children and youth have for experiences with more than one teacher. It is not intended that boys and girls live on a 'secluded island' day after day with one teacher. The teacher's

resources are supplemented by specialists in the areas in which the students are learning. School personnel and facilities, as well as community experts and resources, are used to supplement and enrich the instructional program."

The authors have stressed the opportunities for providing 1) integration and continuity in learning, 2) experiences in democratic living, 3) development of skills in relation to a variety of interrelated problems, and 4) a learning environment sensitive to the unique needs and abilities of individual children.

The teacher interested in the area of language arts is well aware that no subject area can be separated from language arts experiences. The real test of growth in communication skills is their use in a variety of meaningful experiences.

No form of organization in itself ensures a good environment for learning. Probably the way a teacher interacts with children is the crucial factor. We might ask, then, which patterns of organization provide teachers with opportunities to:

- ... understand children as they operate in different kinds of experiences,
- ... help children apply what they are learning in a variety of situations,
- ... help children develop wholesome attitudes and values,

Dr. Wolfson is Associate Professor of Elementary Education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

¹Snyder, Edith R., Ed. *The Self-Contained Classroom*, Washington, D.C.: N.E.A., Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1960. (Price \$1.25)

- ... help children evaluate their development of skills and continue to improve,
- ... help children learn how to learn (problem-solving, searching for information, generalizing, raising questions, experimenting, etc.),
- ... help children learn to work together in a democratic fashion,
- ... help children develop planning and evaluating skills, and
- ... encourage independent thinking and creativity.

The article, "The More We Get Together," in the present issue is one illustration of the imaginative use of the opportunities inherent in the self-contained classroom.

The classroom should be open to a tremendous range of appropriate resources: other teachers, specialists, parents, older and younger children, and a variety of teaching aids and materials.

In general, teachers need to increase the flexibility in the self-contained classroom. Teachers should be encouraged to try new ideas, to cooperate with other teachers, and to exchange ideas and activities among themselves. Teachers should be provided with time for planning, and with time and encouragement for activities which lead to professional growth.

Multi-grade Classes

At a time when many school systems are separating "gifted" children from the general population in elementary schools, The Torrance Unified School District, California, continues to demonstrate an organization based upon their conclusion that grouping patterns should be based upon differences among children rather than upon similarities.

The Torrance plan provides a pattern in which children at three grade levels are

combined in a single class. Approximately equal numbers of first, second, and third graders are placed in a primary group, and fourth, fifth, and sixth graders in an intermediate group.

Warren Hamilton, co-author of the original study which analyzed the effects of this multi-grade grouping, states:

It is my personal belief that all grades in all schools are 'multi-grade' since it is impossible to group children in such a manner as to have them at a particular grade level in more than one subject at any particular time. The actual placing of children into a multi-grade class recognized the differences of pupils and by increasing the general spread of differences enriches the learning situation in the classroom. . . . Since the multi-grade pupils clearly demonstrated greater personal and social growth, it is my opinion that this represents the major area in which the multi-grade structure is superior to a regular grade program. . . . (The multi-grade program) forces the teacher to provide for the differences in children.

While almost all comparisons in the areas of social and personal adjustment and maturity favored the multi-grade pupils, in the majority of cases the growth on the part of multi-grade pupils in the academic areas also favored the multi-grade pupils. These comparisons were not only made on the basis of mean gain of the total classes, but on the basis of the matched pair technique.

In the 1960-61 school year there were seventy-eight multi-grade classes in twenty-six of Torrance's thirty elementary schools. All participants are volunteers.

.....

Books in the Schools, edited by James Cass, is the outcome of a conference ar-

ranged by the American Book Publishers Council's Committee on Reading Development.

The place of books in education, especially in relation to new trends in classroom practice, is discussed from several viewpoints.

Mr. Cass, associate editor of *The Saturday Review Education Supplement*, introduces the pamphlet by saying: "This pamphlet is offered as a step toward closer cooperation between education and publishing to the end that more effective use of books in the classroom may work a true revolution in the schools."

The following excerpts suggest both the concrete nature and the thought provoking quality of the discussion:

We have left the kind of world in which the teacher's chief function was to convey information. The school composed chiefly of classrooms is obsolete. In schools of the future, upwards of half the student's time may be spent in the library, in the science laboratories, or in other workrooms where he can search for knowledge, analyze data, reflect upon the ideas which he is encountering, and put his hunches and conclusions in writing. (Francis S. Chase, Dean of the School of Education, University of Chicago, in his chapter, "Tools for Man the Learner.")

The most educational things kids can do in high schools very often fall into the category of what many observers would call wasted time. Just sitting and reading is a very marvelous way for an adolescent to use up an afternoon. The notion that he must have a purpose is killing. Yet this notion is all over the place—he should be reading for an exam, for a paper, for a book report. The truth is that he ought to be reading because he has an hour and there's a

book somebody told him about. (Martin Mayer, author of "The Schools" (Harper), in the opening chapter of *Books in the Schools*.)

If somehow we could see that \$10 per student per year were earmarked specifically for materials of instruction, I think we could practically revolutionize education. Our teachers would for the first time have the tools available that would make it possible for them to do a good job. In this country we spend 3 or 4 per cent of the total school budget on materials of instruction. When school boards feel they have to save money, it is the instructional materials budget that gets cut because teachers' salaries can't be reduced and school buildings can't be eliminated. . . . I hope there is some way we can convince the public that we could improve education significantly with a very modest amount of money. I am confident that the greatest need is to provide a minimum of \$10 per child for materials of instruction. (Morton Botel, assistant superintendent of schools, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and president-elect, International Reading Association, in his chapter, "Pennsylvania: A Case History.")

This pamphlet can be purchased from the American Book Publishers Council, 58 West 40th Street, New York 18, New York. Price \$1.00.

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Enrichment Teaching Materials

Four new dramatizations are now available in the Enrichment *Landmark Records* series. These latest recordings are based upon the following *Landmark Books*:

Clara Barton: Founder of the American Red Cross, by Helen Dore Boylston
The First Transatlantic Cable, by Adele Gutman Nathan

The Alaska Gold Rush, by May McNeer
Guadalcanal Diary, by Richard Tregaskis.

These well-planned and effectively produced dramatizations are certain to interest many young people. They provide a considerable amount of historical background, particularly enriching for the reluctant reader. They will no doubt stimulate further exploration in books by those children who enjoy reading.

Also of interest are the new Enrichment Documentary Records:

Articles of Confederation
Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address
Alaska: Act for Statehood
Hawaii: Act for Statehood

These records include information about the historical period out of which each document evolved, pertinent opinions of national leaders and ordinary citizens, as well as folk music of the period.

(Write to Enrichment Teaching Materials, 246 Fifth Avenue, New York 1,

New York, for complete information or for the opportunity to preview the records.)

Children's Book Clubs

Junior Literary Guild

Here are the selections for December:
 For boys and girls 5 and 6 years old

What Do You Do, Dear? by Sesyle Joslin
 William R. Scott, \$2.75

For boys and girls 7 and 8 years old

The Little Juggler by Barbara Cooney
 Hastings House, \$3.00

For boys and girls 9, 10 and 11 years old

The Mysterious Christmas Shell by Eleanor Cameron
 Little, Brown, \$3.00

For girls 12 to 16 years old

The Sacred Jewel by Nancy Faulkner
 Doubleday, \$2.95

For boys 12 to 16 years old

The Karting Crowd by James L. Summers
 Westminster Press, \$2.95

Notice

"How Well Are We Teaching Reading?" by E. A. Betts, which appeared in the October, 1961 *Elementary English*, was presented at the Lehigh University Reading Conference, June, 1961. The paper has also been published in the Conference Proceedings: *Controversial Issues in Reading*, A. J. Mazurkiewicz, Editor (Proceedings of the 10th Annual Reading Conference, Jan. 1961) Published by Lehigh University, June, 1961, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Cost \$2.50.



Mabel F. Altstetter



VERSE

The Man Who Sang the Sillies. By John Ciardi. Illustrated by Edward Gory. Lippincott, 1961. \$3.00. (9-12)

When a well-established poet brings his talent to writing for children delightful things happen. John Ciardi again frolics with words both real and invented in twenty-four nonsense poems about boys and girls, oysters, lobsters, time, seasons, and assorted situations and people. The sudden twist of words and intent brings a humorous flavor to all he has to say. There is real understanding of children in his fun and they and their elders will enjoy the rhymes.

Custard the Dragon and the Wicked Knight. By Ogden Nash. Illustrated by Linell. Little, 1961. \$2.75 (4 up)

Custard, a realio, trulio dragon lived with Belinda and her other pets and because he was cowardly he would assume no responsibility. But when a wicked knight abducted Belinda it was not Blink the mouse, Ink the kitten, or Mustard the dog who saved her. Custard rose to the occasion and carried her back home. Per-



haps the former Custard book takes the edge from the originality of this one but the fun is wholesome. Nash's daughter has done the colorful drawings.

Mince Pie and Mistletoe. By Phyllis McGinley. Illustrated by Harold Berson. Lippincott, 1961. \$2.95. (8-11)

In lilting verse, Phyllis McGinley traces the origin of many Christmas customs. England, Spain, Holland, and France have all contributed to the joy of Christmas in our country. Even the Pilgrims are celebrated in a droll rhyme for *not* bringing Christmas to America.

The book is beautiful with its blue and silver cover and blue and reddish brown pictures. It is a book to treasure.

Dr. Altstetter is Professor of English, Emeritus, Miami University (Ohio). She is a well known lecturer and writer in the field of Children's Literature and editor, *Adventuring with Books*, 1956.

The Penny Fiddle. By Robert Graves. Illustrated by Edward Ardizzone. Doubleday, 1961. \$2.50. (Up to 12)

One of England's finest poets has selected twenty-three of his best poems about children for this book. The whimsical drawings of Edward Ardizzone have caught the spirit of the poems and the subdued color is right for the low key of the words. The more mature and thoughtful the child, the more he will enjoy the pensive and often grave mood of the poems.



Listen—the Birds. By Mary Britton Miller. Illustrated by Evaline Ness. Pantheon, 1961. \$3.00 (8-12)

Miss Miller catches the fun of the antics and song of many common birds and in flowing verse presents them to her readers. There is more to bird study than identification and the poet shows the emotional response evoked by watching and enjoying birds. Of the Scarlet Tanager she says, "Bird of flame, bird of fire," and of the Bluejay "Likes to sing, likes to sass, has a voice as loud as brass." All the others are equally right. Both children and adults will enjoy the verses. Miss Ness shows her understanding of the verses and her colorful pictures add greatly to the value of the book. It is a distinguished publication.



Stuff and Nonsense. Written and illustrated by Edgar Parker. Pantheon, 1961. \$3.00. (8-12)

The title is exactly right for the verses because birds and animals frolic through the pages of the book doing all sorts of unrealistic things that delight the reader. The fun of the verses is enhanced by the charm of the illustrations. It is a read-aloud book for all ages to enjoy.

BIOGRAPHY

Beloved Botanist. By Adrian Stoutenburg and Laura Nelson Baker. Scribner, 1961. \$2.95. (12 up)

It is high time that the story of Carl Linnaeus is made available to young people. One of the most remarkable scientists of all time, Linnaeus laid the foundations for modern systemic botany

and contributed to other branches of natural science, notably entomology, zoology, and geology. He was a prodigious writer and his literary style, even in translation, is remarkable. Above all, he was a wonderful human being and the writers of this biography show his loyalty, his earnestness, his tenderness, and his indomitable courage. The book deserves to rank among the best biographies for young people.

Nikola Tesla—Giant of Electricity. By Helen B. Walters. Illustrated by Leonard Everitt Fisher. Crowell, 1961. \$3.50. (12 up)

Tesla was one of the truly great minds of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From his earliest years in Croatia, now Yugoslavia, he was fascinated by power and when only four he invented a waterwheel. He was to live to discover the principle of the rotary magnetic field embodied in the apparatus that harnessed the power of Niagara Falls.

In 1884 he came to America to try to convince Edison that alternating current was better than direct current but the American genius gave him short shift for he was never able to take suggestions or criticism. After many heartbreaking experiences in a new land, George Westinghouse finally gave him a million dollars for his right to his alternating current patents. It was characteristic of the scientist that he tore up the contract because he felt that Westinghouse's belief in him was more valuable than the money.

Tesla invented new forms of dynamos, induction coils, transformers, condensers, arc and incandescent lamps and many other kinds of electrical apparatus. He did not plod like Edison who invented by trial and error, but he could do complicated mathematical computations in his head and saw intricate apparatus take form in his imagi-

nation. He was admired rather than liked. He had no business sense and was happiest when he could spend uninterrupted hours in his laboratory.

Dr. Walters tells the story of Tesla's life with warmth and understanding. A glossary explains electrical terms and a chronological table relates Tesla's life, (1856-1943), to historical events. This book deserves wide circulation.

Plant Explorer. By Beryl Williams and Samuel Epstein. Messner, 1961. \$2.95. (10-14)

David Fairchild, botanist and plant explorer, roamed the world in search of plants to add to America's food and to her beauty. He introduced over 200,000 species. Many of his introductions such as soy beans, better strains of wheat and cotton, have added greatly to our economy. His work established the vital New Crops Research Branch of the Department of Agriculture. With his wife, a daughter of Alexander Graham Bell, he made many journeys to locate plants. Their life together is a beautiful story in itself. Around their home near Miami, Florida, plants from all over the world came to live and grow. The David Fairchild Gardens in Dade County, Florida, is a fitting memorial to them and their work.

The authors have done an excellent piece of research for this book and their writing is suited to their material for David Fairchild lives and works as the reader follows him through the pages.

Great Men of Medicine. By Ruth Fox Hume. Illustrated by Robert Frankenberg. Random, 1961. \$1.95. (10-15)

This book appeared first in 1947 and was reprinted eleven times. The author has now prepared a new version incorporating the latest medical history for the *World Landmark* series. Ten of the great men in

the field from Vesalius to Alexander Fleming are included and fit into a pattern of development that makes the reader almost a part of the great discoveries. The book is clearly written and a pleasure to read.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Great Constitution. By Henry Commager Steele. Bobbs-Merrill, 1961. \$3.50. (12 up)

A famous historian has added to his *The Great Declaration* and *The Great Proclamation* an equally valuable book in the current publication. In it he traces the steps by which the Constitution came about and evokes vividly the times and the men who made the document. He shows the men with their weaknesses, pettiness, fears, and greatness. The reader will have a better understanding of the Constitution and the rich heritage that is ours because he reads the book. There are many illustrations taken from prints and paintings of the time.

The Fishing Fleets of New England. By Mary Ellen Chase. Illustrated with photographs and prints. Houghton, 1961. \$1.95. (11 up)

The history of the fishing fleets seeking cod off the Grand Banks near Newfound-

land is the major part of the history of New England. Even before New England was settled the abundance of fish lured men from French, English, Portuguese, and Spanish ports to suffer almost unbelievable hardships to carry home the rich harvest from the sea. Mary Ellen Chase, the eminent novelist, begins her book with the history of the four or five hundred years before the Pilgrims came and follows this with the story of what the cod has meant in the economy of New England. She especially stresses the courage of the men and boys who manned the fishing boats from sailing boat days to the present. Mechanization of methods of fishing and processing now dominate the industry and few aspects of the former life remain.

The book is one of the excellent *North Star* series and is a worthy member of group of books published under the slogan, "Good history makes good reading."

The California Gold Rush. By Ralph K. Andrist (in consultation with Archibald Hanna). Illustrated with maps, drawings, paintings, prints, and photographs of the period. American Heritage, 1961. \$3.79. (10 up)

This is the tenth in an excellent series dealing with our American heritage and gives the reader a clear picture of the turbulent times that followed Sutter's discovery of gold in California. A great deal of careful research has gone into the making of the book. The author quotes from diaries and journals of the miners themselves and a convincing picture emerges of the time with its hardships, lawlessness, enthusiasm and just plain luck. In the first two years after the discovery almost one hundred thousand people poured into the new territory. Only a few of the miners grew rich but the story of those who did is highly dramatic.



The one hundred twenty illustrations in color and black and white help to understand the times. The whole series is a valuable addition to any library because no textbook can achieve the vigor and interest to be found in these books.

Cave Man to Space Man. By Margaret Frisky. Pictures by Mary Gehr. Children's Press, 1961. \$2.95 (9 up)



The subtitle of this fascinating book is *Picture History of Transportation* and it is just that. Throughout the pages the drama of transportation as it affects people and in turn is affected by them is presented. There is an immediacy to the past that is made striking by the use of colored pictures based on Miss Gehr's knowledge of archaeology. The wonder of today's speed is sharply pointed up. The book closes with this startling statement:

There is only one limit to possible speed if what Einstein said is right. He said, "Nothing can travel faster than the speed of light. That is 186,300 miles per second. How far is the moon? Forty-five minutes from Broadway?"

SCIENCE

All About Sound and Ultrasonics. By Ira M. Freeman. Drawings by Irving Geis and photographs. Random, 1961. \$1.95. (10-14)

Another *All About* book is always wel-

come and this one maintains the high standard of the previous volumes. The author, an eminent physicist, is especially successful in writing for laymen in a provocative and interesting way. He begins his second chapter with the assertion that "Every sound you hear can be traced to something that moves." He begins with a description of Robert Boyle's experiments with the air pump that proved that air carries sound and in subsequent chapters among other things, how you hear, how strings make music, the shapes of sound, storing sound, and sounds you cannot hear. He ends with a description of breaking the sound barrier and with some of the marvels of today's use of sound and predictions for the future. A useful glossary is found at the end of the book.

Light All Around. By Tillie S. Pine and Joseph Levine. Illustrated by Bernice Myers. Whittlesey, 1961. \$2.50 (7-11)

Simple language and everyday experiences combine to make an exciting book that answers many questions about light that children want to know. What makes shadows? Where do colors come from? How does a periscope work? Nine other equally interesting questions are answered. The illustrations are excellent and add value to the book.

Ocean Harvest. By Helen Wolff Vogel and Mary L. Caruso. Illustrated by John Kaufmann. Knopf, 1961. \$3.00. (10-14)

The alluring world of the sea is opened to the reader by two authors who know both the ocean and how to write about it. They point out in convincing fashion the need to know more about the oceans and the treasures in them as the population of the world increases. Only one percent of mankind's food supply now comes from the sea and the vast mineral resources are

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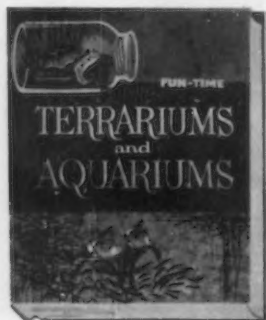
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Terrariums and Aquariums. By Jerome Leavitt and John Huntsberger. Pictures by Bill Armstrong. Children's Press. 1961. \$2.50. (8-12)



Anyone who has ever constructed an aquarium or a terrarium knows the pleasure and knowledge that can come from the experience. This book tells how to make in addition to the usual kind, terrariums for ants, spiders, earthworms, desert, bog and woodland. Aquariums suggested are fresh water temperate, fresh water tropical, and marine. Specific directions are given for the making of all these kinds and the pictures help make the methods clear.

First Book of Air. By David C. Knight. Illustrated by photographs and line drawings. Watts, 1961. \$1.95. (9-12)

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Where do Christmas trees come from? What kind of tree makes the best Christmas tree? What other uses do trees serve? The author, who has written many helpful science books for young children, answers these questions and many more. He tells simply but effectively about tree farms, tree nurseries and what trees do for people. With the help of pictures, the identification of many kinds of trees is made possible. There is a strong note of the need for conservation that runs throughout the book.

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The Borrowers Aloft. By Mary Norton. Illustrated by Beth and Joe Krush. Harcourt, 1961. \$2.95. (8 up)



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(continued on page 603)

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Index Volume XXXVIII

- Activity for Enriching Spelling Lessons, An—Arthur A. Delaney, 382.
- Aids for Librarians in Elementary Schools—Barbara V. Olson, 336.
- Aliveness—Then Retention—Ada Pritchett, 581.
- Archer, Marguerite—Effective Educational Reporting, 22.
- Are Fast Readers the Best Readers?—J. Harlan Shores, 236.
- Arnold, Frieda—A Creative Writing Activity, 298.
- Artley, A. Sterl—An Eclectic Approach to Reading, 320.
- Beardwood, Valerie—Scott O'Dell and *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, 373.
- Becker, Samuel L.—English in the Mass Media, 250.
- Betts, Emmett A.—How Well Are We Teaching Reading? 377.
- Blakely, W. Paul and Erma M. Shadle—A Study of Two Readiness-for-Reading Programs in Kindergarten, 502.
- Boney, C. DeWitt—A New Program Needed for the Late Reader, 316.
- Brack, Kenneth H.—Creativity in Writing Is Where You Find It, 89.
- Bremer, Neville H.—Ways to Improve Spelling in the Elementary Grades, 301.
- Burns, Paul C. and Ruth Hines—Kentucky Is His Home, 137.
- Burns, Paul C.—Teaching Listening in Elementary Schools, 11.
- Burns, Paul C. and Ruth Hines—Tennessee's Teller of Tall Tales—William O. Steele, 545.
- Burns, Paul C. and Vernon E. Troxel—A Year of Research in Language Arts Instruction: 1960, 384.
- Calhoun, R. Thomas—Why Not a Central Library in Elementary Schools? 37.
- Carlson, Ruth Kearney—Seventeen Qualities of Original Writing, 576.
- Carlson, Ruth Kearney—Stimulating Creativity in Children and Youth, 165.
- Child, A Creator, The—Hilda Hardy, 491.
- Children Do Enjoy Poetry—Gerald G. Duffy, 422.
- Classroom Teacher as a Researcher, The—Carlton M. Singleton, Paul B. Diederich and Walter Hill, 330.
- Clubb, Merrel D., Jr.—Standard English as a Foreign Language, 497.
- Cohan, Mayme—Two and a Half Reading, 509.
- Corliss, William S.—Elementary School Libraries, 494.
- Creative Writing Activity, A—Frieda Arnold, 298.
- Creative Writing and the Classics—Laura Seil Svoboda, 29.
- Creativity in Writing Is Where You Find it—Kenneth H. Brack, 89.
- Crocker, Laura M.—Using the Flannel Board with Stories, 404.
- Davis, David C.—A Tool for the Selection of Children's Books: The Lewis Carroll Shelf Awards, 549.
- Dawkins, John—Reading Theory—An Important Distinction, 389.
- Delaney, Arthur A.—An Activity for Enriching Spelling Lessons, 382.
- Denslow, Orriene D.—Vocabulary and Sentence Study of Eight First Grade Science Books, 487.
- Diederich, Paul B., Carlton M. Singleton and Walter Hill—The Classroom Teacher as a Researcher, 330.
- Dolch, Edward W.—Individualized Reading vs. Group Reading I, 566.
- Dozen Methods for Stimulating Creative Writing, A—Edward N. Hook, 87.
- Duffy, Gerald G.—Children Do Enjoy Poetry, 422.
- Duker, Sam—Goals of Teaching Listening Skills in the Elementary School, 170.
- Eclectic Approach to Reading, An—A. Sterl Artley, 320.
- Economics Through Children's Books, Allan D. Jacobs, 15.
- Effective Educational Reporting—Marguerite Archer, 22.
- Elementary School Libraries—William S. Corliss, 494.
- English in the Mass Media—Samuel L. Becker, 250.

- Evaluation of Some Easy-to-Read Trade Books for Children, An—David H. Russell, 475.
- Fagerlie, Anna M.—Pupils, Problems and Books, 406.
- Few "Ground Rules" for New Teachers, A—W. Carman Lucas, 393.
- Freedom to Research—Carlton M. Singleton, 114.
- Goals of Teaching Listening Skills in the Elementary School—Sam Duker, 170.
- Groff, Patrick J.—Materials for Individualized Reading, 1.
- Groff, Patrick J.—New Speeds of Handwriting, 564.
- Grouping Practices in Individualized Reading—Irene W. Vite, 91.
- Grubbs, Bernice—Putting English into Practice, 292.
- Haiku, a New Poetry Experience for Children—Elizabeth Scofield, 24.
- Handwriting Practices in Our Schools Today—Fred M. King, 483.
- Hardy, Hilda—The Child, a Creator, 491.
- Heterogeneous, Homogeneous or Individualized Approaches to Reading—Dayton G. Rothrock, 233.
- Hill, Walter, Paul B. Diederich and Carlton Singleton—The Classroom Teacher as a Researcher, 330.
- Hines, Ruth and Paul C. Burns—Kentucky Is His Home, 137.
- Hines, Ruth and Paul C. Burns—Tennessee's Teller of Tall Tales—William O. Steele, 545.
- Hook, Edward N.—A Dozen Methods for Stimulating Creative Writing, 87.
- How Many Children Are Successful Readers?—Jerry G. Keshian, 408.
- How Well Are We Teaching Reading?—Emmett A. Betts, 377.
- Hurley, Elsie M.—Motivating Reluctant Readers, 328.
- Ikenberry, Nelda B.—Teaching Machines, 395.
- Individualized Reading vs. Group Reading I—Edward W. Dolch, 566.
- Ingalls, Lucille and Frances Issott—The More We Get Together, 561.
- Issott, Frances and Lucille Ingalls, The More We Get Together, 561.
- Jacobs, Allan D.—Economics Through Children's Books, 15.
- Kentucky Is His Home—Paul C. Burns and Ruth Hines, 137.
- Keshian, Jerry G.—How Many Children Are Successful Readers? 408.
- King, Fred M.—Handwriting Practices in Our Schools Today, 483.
- Knudson, Rozanne—Try Dada Data, 28.
- Language Arts in Today's World, The—Stanley S. Stahl, Jr., 556.
- Language Arts Research, 1960—Ralph C. Staiger, 175.
- Lefevre, Carl A.—Social-Class Influences Upon Learning: Linguistic Implications, 553.
- Letson, Charles T.—Minimum Standards for Professional Training of Reading Specialists, 414.
- Let's Have a Class Newspaper—Esther Unkel, 411.
- Linguistics and I—Carrie Stegall, 229.
- List of Books for Retarded Readers—Sister Mary Julitta, O.S.F., 79.
- Lucas, W. Carman—A Few "Ground Rules" for New Teachers, 393.
- Materials for Individualized Reading—Patrick J. Groff, 1.
- Meaning for the Masses—Jacquelyn White Prince, 308.
- Minimum Standards for Professional Training of Reading Specialists—Charles T. Letson, 414.
- Moore, Walter J.—William Scott Gray, 1885-1960, 187.
- More We Get Together, The—Lucille Ingalls and Frances Issott, 561.
- Motivating Reluctant Readers—Elsie M. Hurley, 328.
- Murphy, Marie—Poise Is Practice Perfected, 232.
- New Program Needed for the Late Readers, A—C. DeWitt Boney, 316.
- New Speeds of Handwriting—Patrick Groff, 564.
- Odom, Robert R.—Sequence and Grade Placement of Capitalization Skills, 118.
- Olson, Barbara V.—Aids for Librarians in Elementary Schools, 336.
- Orr, Evelyn—Personalized Reading, 227.
- Painter, Helen W.—*Rifles for Watie*, 287.
- Personalized Reading—Evelyn Orr, 227.
- Poise Is Practice Perfected—Marie Murphy, 232.

- Poll, Bernard—Why Children Like Horse Stories, 473.
- Prince, Jacquelyn White—Meaning for the Masses, 308.
- Pritchett, Ada—Aliveness—Then Retention, 581.
- Pryor, Francis—We Can't Afford Not to Write, 509.
- Pupils' Interest in Reading—Dorothy Skelton, 246.
- Pupils, Problems and Books—Anna M. Fagerlie, 406.
- Putting English Into Practice—Bernice Grubbs, 292.
- Reading Instruction—A Forward Look—Paul A. Witty, 151.
- Reading Research That Makes a Difference—David H. Russell, 74.
- Reading Theory—An Important Distinction—John Dawkins, 389.
- Reid, Virginia M.—Weaning Books, 8.
- Rifles for Watie—Helen W. Painter, 287.
- Roll the Press—Grade Four Style—Bettie Walbridge, 9.
- Rothrock, Dayton G.—Heterogeneous, Homogeneous or Individualized Approaches to Reading, 233.
- Rusnak, Mary—What Happens Next? 225.
- Russell, David H.—An Evaluation of Some Easy-to-Read Trade Books for Children, 475.
- Russell, David H.—Reading Research That Makes a Difference, 74.
- Schwartz, Sheila—What Is Listening? 221.
- Scofield, Elizabeth—Haiku, a New Poetry Experience for Children, 24.
- Scott O'Dell and *Island of the Blue Dolphins*—Valerie Beardwood, 373.
- Sequence and Grade Placement of Capitalization Skills—Robert R. Odom, 118.
- Seventeen Qualities of Original Writing—Ruth Kearney Carlson, 576.
- Shadle, Erma M. and W. Blakely—A Study of Two Readiness-for-Reading Programs in Kindergarten, 502.
- Shores, J. Harlan—Are Fast Readers the Best Readers? 236.
- Should We Teach the Short Story?—Sister Mary Patrick, S.C.S.C., 580.
- Singleton, Carlton M., Paul B. Diederich and Walter Hill—The Classroom Teacher as a Researcher, 330.
- Singleton, Carlton M.—Freedom to Research, 114.
- Sister Mary Julitta, O.S.F.—List of Books for Retarded Readers, 79.
- Sister Mary Patrick, S.C.S.C.—Should We Teach the Short Story? 580.
- Skelton, Dorothy—Pupils' Interest in Reading, 246.
- Smith, Nila B.—What Have We Accomplished in Reading? A Review of the Past Fifty Years, 141.
- Smith, Sally True—Why Teach Poetry, 27.
- Social-Class Influences Upon Learning: Linguistic Implications—Carl A. Lefevre, 553.
- Stahl, Stanley S., Jr.—The Language Arts in Today's World, 556.
- Staiger, Ralph C.—Language Arts Research, 1960, 175.
- Standard English as a Foreign Language—Merrel D. Clubb, Jr., 497.
- Stegall, Carrie—Linguistics and I, 229.
- Still, Jane S.—A Summer Remedial Reading Program, 342.
- Stimulating Creativity in Children and Youth—Ruth Kearney Carlson, 165.
- Strickland, Ruth G.—What Thou Lovest Well Remains, 65.
- Studies of Children's Interest—A Brief Summary III—Paul A. Witty, 33.
- Study of Two Readiness-for-Reading Programs in Kindergarten, A—W. Paul Blakely and Erma M. Shadle, 502.
- Summer Remedial Reading Program, A—Jane S. Still, 342.
- Svoboda, Laura Seil—Creative Writing and the Classics, 29.
- Teaching Listening in Elementary Schools—Paul C. Burns, 11.
- Teaching Machines—Nelda B. Ikenberry, 395.
- Televieing by Children and Youth—Paul A. Witty, 103.
- Tennessee's Teller of Tall Tales—William O. Steele—Paul C. Burns and Ruth Hines, 545.
- Tool for the Selection of Children's Books, A: The Lewis Carroll Shelf Awards—David C. Davis, 549.
- Troxel, Vernon E. and Paul C. Burns—A Year of Research in Language Arts Instruction: 1960, 384.
- Try Dada Data—Rozanne Knudson, 28.
- Two and a Half Reading—Mayme Cohan, 509.
- Unkel, Esther—Let's Have a Class Newspaper, 411.
- Using the Flannel Board with Stories—Laura M. Crocker, 404.

- Vite, Irene W.—Grouping Practices in Individualized Reading, 91.
- Vocabulary and Sentence Study of Eight First Grade Science Books—Orriene D. Denslow, 487.
- Walbridge, Bettie—Roll the Press—Grade Four Style, 9.
- Ways to Improve Spelling in the Elementary Grades—Neville H. Bremer, 301.
- Weaning Books—Virginia M. Reid, 8.
- We Can't Afford Not to Write—Francis Pryor, 509.
- What Happens Next?—Mary Rusnak, 225.
- What Have We Accomplished in Reading? A Review of the Past Fifty Years—Nila B. Smith, 141.
- What Is Listening?—Sheila Schwartz, 221.
- What Thou Lovest Well Remains—Ruth G. Strickland, 65.
- Why Children Like Horse Stories—Bernard Poll, 473.
- Why Not a Central Library in Elementary Schools?—R. Thomas Calhoun, 37.
- Why Teach Poetry—Sally True Smith, 27.
- William Scott Gray, 1885-1960—Walter J. Moore, 187.
- Witty, Paul A.—Studies of Children's Interest—A Brief Summary III, 33.
- Witty, Paul A.—Televiewing by Children and Youth, 103.
- Witty, Paul A.—Reading Instruction—A Forward Look, 151.
- Year of Research in Language Arts Instruction, A: 1960—Paul C. Burns and Vernon E. Troxel, 384.

(continued from page 599)

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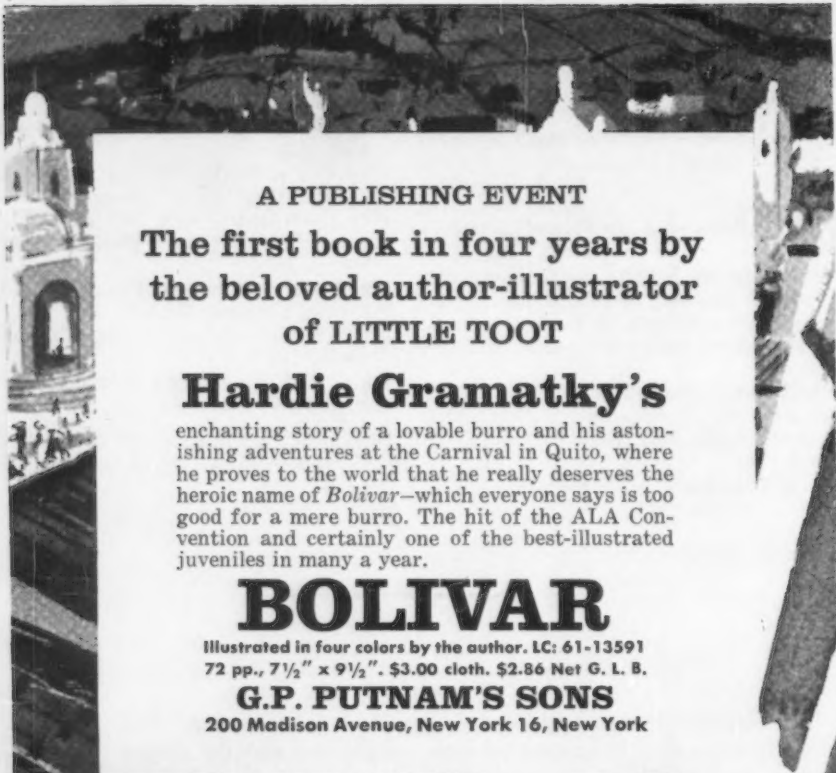
A Stranger at Green Knowe. By L. M. Boston. Illustrated by Peter Boston. Harcourt and World, 1961. \$3.00 (10-14)

Against the beauty of an old English garden and manor house the strange drama of a refugee Chinese boy and a caged gorilla in the London zoo plays itself out to the enjoyment of the reader. The unusual kinship felt by the boy who had lived most of his life in refugee camps and the gorilla makes an exciting and imaginative plot replete with adventure and understanding. The beloved owner of the manor appears in this book as she has in the three others

about Green Knowe. The writing is distinguished and the feeling for life values is strong.

Under This Roof. By Borghild Dahl. Dutton, 1961. \$3.50. (12-16)

When both parents were killed in an accident, Kristine persuaded her well-intentioned but selfish relatives to let her try to keep her younger brothers and sisters together in the parents' home. This is a heartwarming story of courage and love told in the setting of rural Minnesota sixty years ago. Illness, poverty, and a blizzard together with other mishaps that beset the Norwegian immigrants came to Kristine. With grim determination she won through and managed to keep the family together. There is no sentimentality or heroics in the book but there is a convincing account of a part of our country that was built by courage like Kristine's.



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